

Using Art in the Pursuit of Social and Political Ends

**An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Programme in Giuseppe
Chiari's fresco "The Apotheosis of Marc Antonio II Colonna", in
Palazzo Colonna, Rome**

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Preface

Visiting the great palaces of Rome really invites reflections about the relationship between art and the social and political goals of the art patrons. The profusion of symbols, signs and scenes that embellish the 16th and 17th century palaces of *le grande famiglie Romane*, communicates complex messages to the readers and leaves us highly valuable testimonies about a time filled with remarkable wealth, ambitions and status. All expressed in magnificent fresco programmes, which makes these families and their art of continued interest and relevance.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Einar Petterson, who has critically commented my text as well as encouraged me throughout the working process. His efforts have been to great inspiration. I am also grateful to Professor Einar Petterson for twice inviting me to present my thesis at his symposiums at The Norwegian Institute in Rome. This has been a unique possibility for me to air central questions in my thesis for a broader audience.

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All translations of German and Italian works referred in footnotes are by the author unless stated otherwise.

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Summary

The thesis addresses the use of art in the pursuit of social and political ends by one of the oldest Roman noble families, the Colonna family. The object of analysis is the fresco by Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari *The Apotheosis of Marc Antonio II Colonna*, in Palazzo Colonna, Rome dating from about the year 1700. The fresco depicts the family's hero of the *Battle of Lepanto* in 1571, Marc Antonio II Colonna, as he ascends towards *Immortality*, which is portrayed seated on a throne in an almost divine light. The main question is to what extent it is possible to understand and interpret this fresco, with its symbols and scenes, as an expression of the social and political aspirations of the Colonna family at the turn of the 17th century. And how likely is it that the programme of the fresco was chosen for social and political purposes, i.e. as means to fulfil the goals and ambitions of the family.

After examining the iconography, I discuss selected signs and symbols in relation to certain textual sources and dimensions of the contemporary social and political context. This includes the possible goals and aspirations of the House of Colonna as well as other, especially Roman, fresco cycles. The ordering of symbols and scenes is also discussed in the light of visual communication.

In this highly competitive Roman society, with nobility aspiring for power and status, I assert that the iconography and composition of the fresco both reflects the society while at the same time becoming in a way evidence of it. Through the selection of symbols and scenes, the fresco produces its own context, and by making this rhetorical manoeuvre, chooses for the readers the relevant context to consider.

My argument in the thesis is that the House of Colonna pursue their social and political ends and ambitions by strategically contextualizing the representation of the family hero and his achievements. Through their selection of symbols and scenes, the fresco represents the chosen reality the family believed would benefit it the most, given their situation and ambitions. In this way, it is asserted in the thesis that the rhetorical functions of this fresco constitute its symbolic form.

1. Background, perspectives and problems

The creation of art to advance social and political ends is an old invention. In the heydays of the Roman Empire, emperors' portraits were spread across the empire as a way to visualize and communicate the presence of the emperor and ensure the obedience of the people. Visual communication has also been highly important within the Church. When confronted with the Reformatory movement in central Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, art was important in visualizing the tenants of the Church of Rome.

In this thesis, I shall be focusing on art used in the pursuit of social and political ends by one of the oldest Roman noble families, the Colonna family. As my object of analysis I shall use a fresco from about the year 1700 by Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari, *The Apotheosis of Marc Antonio II Colonna*, in Palazzo Colonna, Rome. I ask to what extent it is possible to understand and interpret this fresco, with its symbols and scenes, as an expression of the social and political aspiration of the Colonna family at the turn of the 17th century.

In investigating this, I will review the history of this old Roman family in the second half of the 17th century, especially the situation which might have led to the elevated status given Marc Antonio II in the *Galleria Colonna*. In this analysis, I ask three specific questions. Firstly, what are the symbols and scenes depicted in the Chiari fresco? Secondly, what characterized the social and political situation of the House of Colonna at the turn of the 17th century and what can we assume about their goals and ambitions at the time? And thirdly, how likely is it that the programme of the fresco was chosen for social and political purposes, i.e. as means to fulfil the goals and ambitions of the family?

The discussion will be organized in relation to different interrelated perspectives. Firstly, I shall clarify the iconography of the fresco, before discussing a few selected traits of the iconography in relation to possible textual sources. Thirdly, I discuss the iconography both in relation to certain dimensions of the contemporary social and political context, as well as other, especially Roman, fresco cycles. Finally, I discuss the ordering of symbols and scenes in the light of visual communication. What message is visually communicated by the fresco?

1.1. The fresco

The Apotheosis of Marc Antonio II Colonna was painted by Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari (1654-1727) in the years 1699-1702.¹ Marc Antonio II Colonna was a general with the *Holy League*, who won the *Battle of Lepanto* against the Turks in 1571. The fresco embellishes the vault of the eastern anteroom, the *throne room*, next to the main hall of the *Galleria Colonna* in the Palazzo Colonna on the slopes of the Quirinale in Rome.² The fresco is 13.16 meters measured east-west, while the breadth of the west and the east side is 10.7 meters.³

1.2. State of research

Pascoli gives an early introduction to Chiari and his in *Vite de Pittori, Scultori ed Architetti moderni* from 1730.⁴ After describing Chiari as a painter of great skill and honour Pascoli discusses briefly the iconography of the fresco in Palazzo Colonna⁵.

Apart from Pascoli's, there is no other biography of the painter Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari. The closest we get is a 1968 article by Bernhard Kerber⁶ in which he also makes some iconographic notes on the fresco. But it is not a complete study.

A more extensive description of the fresco is offered by Steffi Roettgen in her study of Italian frescoes.⁷ In the chapter dedicated to Palazzo Colonna, she gives a short historical account of the family history during the 17th century by way of introduction to her limited iconographic description of several frescoes in the palace, among them the fresco by Chiari. Her account, however, is rather selective. She also draws some formal lines between the frescoes in Galleria Colonna and the mid 17th century fresco, the *Aeneas cycle*, by Pietro da Cortona in Palazzo Pamphilj on Piazza Navona, which she describes as a possible source of inspiration for the development of the gallery in Palazzo Colonna.

¹ See illustration 1.

² The plan of the *Galleria Colonna* is given in illustration 2. In illustration 3, we see through the gallery from the west to east. This was the entrance for visitors. The fresco by Chiari is in the *anteroom* at the end of this gallery.

³ Strunck finds the west breadth of the fresco to be 10.70 meters and the east breadth 10.67. Strunck 2007:451.

⁴ This is one of the earliest versions of an account of the lives of great artists, including the life of Chiari. It is in the same *Vita* tradition as the more famous one by Giorgio Vasari about his fellow Renaissance artist. Vasari published his *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori et architetti*, in English translation *The Lives of the most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, in Florence in 1550.

⁵ The fact that Chiari is given a place in this representation of modern painters, sculptors and architects tells us that Chiari must have been a recognized painter at the time.

⁶ Kerber 1968:75-86.

⁷ Roettgen discusses frescoes made from the 16th until the 18th century, see Roettgen 2007. Roettgen surveys 22 Italian fresco programmes, between that of Annibale Carracci and his pupils and the end of the 18th century.

The most elaborate study of the art and architecture of the Palazzo Colonna is that of Christina Strunck at the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome. In her 2007 doctoral thesis *Berninis unbekanntes Meisterwerk*, she makes use of the archives of the Colonna family to build an extensive documentation of the family history. Strunck is stressing the social position of the family from the early 14th century and onwards to the beginning of the 18th century, and of the whole history of the Palazzo Colonna as a building. In her own words:

*Es handelt sich einerseits um eine baugeschichtliche und bautypologische Untersuchung, andererseits um eine Analyse des Raumprogramms: Die Deckenfresken und die Wanddekoration, aber auch die Architekturformen selbst sind Bedeutungsträger, die vor dem Hintergrund der sozialen und politischen Aspiration der Colonna.*⁸

And, she continues, *nach ihrer Botschaft befragt werden.*⁹ A central thesis of her work is that the architecture and the embellishment of the *Galleria Colonna* aims at asserting, with artistic means, the Colonna as the *erste Familie Roms*.¹⁰

Social competition, according to Strunck, was decisive for the shaping of the building and its embellishment.¹¹ A central question in her research is *welches image wollten die Colonna durch ihr Auftreten, ihre Motti und Impresen, ihre Feste, ihre Bauprojekte, ihre Palastausstattung vermitteln.*¹² Strunck discusses the possible intentions of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna,¹³ the builder and commissioner of large parts of the building.¹⁴ The fresco by Chiari

⁸ *It is, on the one side, an inquiry into the history and typology of a building and on the other side, an analysis of the programmes of the rooms: the frescoes in the ceiling and the decoration of the walls [...] [B]ut the form of the architecture of the building itself carries meaning, against the background of the social and political aspirations of the Colonna.* All translations in the thesis are by the author unless stated otherwise. Strunck 2007:13.

⁹ *[Questions will] be asked about its message,* Strunck 2007:13.

¹⁰ *[T]he first family of Rome,* Strunck 2007:18. Strunck continues: *Ein zentrale These der vorliegenden Arbeit lautet: Architektur und Ausstattung der Galleria Colonna zielten darauf ab, den (vermeintlichen, heiss umstrittenen) Rang der Colonna als "erste Familie Roms" mit künstlerischen Mitteln zu behaupten.* In English: *A central thesis of the present work is that the architecture and the interior of the Galleria Colonna were intended (presumably, intensely disputed) to assert [or defend] the rank [or status] of the Colonnas as the "first family of Rome" by artistic means,* Strunck 2007:18. Strunck builds here on approaches developed by German historians such as Wolfgang Reinhard, see Reinhard 1975 and Reinhard 1991, and Volker Reinhardt, see Reinhardt 1996; and the art historian Arne Karsten, see Karsten 2003. They understand nepotism as an important mechanism behind the large production of art in Rome during the 17th century. This will be discussed further in chapter 3.

¹¹ Strunck does not consider the large art collection at Palazzo Colonna in her study.

¹² *[W]hat was the image the Colonna family wanted to communicate, in their conduct, their motto and impresa, and their parties, their building project and the arrangement of the palace?* Strunck 2007:16.

¹³ Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna de Paliano, 1637-89, led the first phase of the great building project until he died in 1689, when his son, Filippo II Colonna di Paliano, (1663-1714), succeeded him.

¹⁴ Strunck 2007:16.

was ordered by his son, Filippo II Colonna, who continued the embellishment programme at the turn of the 17th century.

In her conclusions, Strunck builds her arguments to a great extent on a detailed description of the family history and their efforts to strengthen their social and political status and influence. From this description, she infers the intentions of the family with the development and embellishment of the palace. Her argument also draws on references given in the frescoes, although to a minor degree and mainly those in the main hall of the gallery.¹⁵ She does not mention the Chiari fresco in this respect.

My analysis deviate from the one by Strunck in that I explicit focus on the Chiari fresco, which is only iconographic described by Strunck. Although we might say that Strunck evaluates the embellishment of the gallery in a social and political context, she does not inquire further into the reasoning behind the selection of symbols and scenes in the frescoes, especially not when it comes to the Chiari fresco. Although she has some interesting references to elements in the fresco by Coli and Gherardi, her study is more a parallelization of the history of the Colonna family¹⁶ and especially their contemporary social position and the rebuilding and embellishment of the palace as such. Here, Strunck's approach differs from mine, in that I address the use of specific symbols and scenes in the Chiari fresco in detail and the likely social and political reasoning behind their representation. I discuss the pursuit of political and social ends and aspirations of the Colonna family, through a contextualization of the symbols and scenes in the Chiari fresco, while Strunck inquires the whole building and embellishment project, without going into much details when it comes to the signs and symbols in the frescoes.

In addition to these studies, Palazzo Colonna is represented in different publications. They tend to be short historical presentations or isolated reviews of the decorations in selected parts of the palace. Several have an introductory form, and the fresco by Chirari is frequently treated in a rather superficial way, if at all.¹⁷

In relation to earlier research, it is worth mentioning the literature on the history of the Colonna family, although it is limited. Some researchers have focused on the Colonna family in terms of art patronage in the 17th century. This applies to Alessandra Anselmi and her

¹⁵ This main hall of the gallery is embellished by Coli and Gherardi. I comment their frescoes in chapter five. See also illustration 3.

¹⁶ References in this study to the Colonna family and of *House of Colonna* are to the Paliano branch, headed by Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna and later, from 1689, his son, Filippo II Colonna.

¹⁷ One example is the 2007 book by Carlo Cresti and Claudio Rendina *Palazzi of Rome*. The authors give an introduction to the Colonna palace and the gallery. Another example is Eduard A. Safrik's 1997 *Palazzo Colonna, La Galleria*. Guida, and Eduard A. Safrik 1998 *Palazzo Colonna. Appartamento Principessa Isabelle*. Guida, both of which provides short introductions to selected parts of the Colonna palace.

article about the *San Carlo ai Catinari* high altar in Rome.¹⁸ In this regard, Natalia Gozzano published an interesting study in 2004, focusing on the collection of paintings by Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, and the prestige attached to collecting art among the Roman nobility during the baroque.¹⁹ Others have focused on the family history²⁰ or on Marc Antonio alone.²¹ Many of them deal more with the *Battle of Lepanto* than with Marc Antonio Colonna, who was one of several leaders in the Holy League. Konstam²² and Capponi²³ both belong to this category.

So apart from the literature on Marc Antonio and the *Battle of Lepanto*, research on the Colonna family, their house and on Chiari's fresco in the east wing is limited. Strunck ascribes this lack of research partly to the fact that the Colonna archive was closed to researchers until as recently as 1996,²⁴ and partly to the fact that the archive's documents had not been arranged in chronological order. No list of contents existed, making thematic searches very difficult.²⁵ In relation to the Chiari fresco, studies so far have therefore mostly focused on interpreting and understanding the iconography.²⁶

1.3. Contemporary social and political ends of the Colonna family

The main focus of this thesis is on whether and in what way the content of the Chiari fresco derived from a social and political reasoning. It is therefore important to ask what was at stake for the House of Colonna at the turn of the 17th century. In general, the dynamic in the Roman society during the 17th century was characterized by a high degree of competition among the nobility for positions and status, both in the Church and in the civil society. Different families from other regions of today's Italy tried to establish themselves socially and politically in Rome, especially in influential positions in the Church. These newcomers challenged the position of the old Roman nobility, among which was the Colonna family. As I discuss more extensively in chapter 5,²⁷ the House of Colonna had been a highly influential force for centuries, counting a pope and several cardinals among its members over the years. At the turn of the 17th century its financial, social and political position had deteriorated. The Colonna family, headed by Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna (1637-89) from 1659 until 1689 then

¹⁸ Anselmi 1996.

¹⁹ Gozzano 2004.

²⁰ Paschini 1955 and Rehberg 1992.

²¹ Bazzano 2003.

²² Konstam, 2003.

²³ Capponi, 2006.

²⁴ Strunck 2007:13.

²⁵ Strunck 2007:15.

²⁶ See Kerber 1968 and Roettgen 2007.

²⁷ See especially section 5.1.3.

succeeded by his son Filippo II Colonna (1663-1714), had wanted to reverse this downward tendency in status into prosperity, and continue their elevated position in Roman society.

It is reasonable to assume that Filippo II Colonna wanted to have a member of the family elected to a high position in the Church, as a cardinal in a bid to regain the family's former status, but also to keep prestigious secular position such as, for instance, the ambassadorship, *Gran Contestabile*, to the King of Naples. This was a position of high esteem at the turn of the 17th century.

As we shall see in chapter 5, visual art received a special position in this situation, as a way of legitimizing social and political statues as well as strength and credibility. During the 16th and 17th centuries influential families and the Church of Rome embarked on large-scale projects to decorate their palace interiors with frescoes, paintings and sculptures. Also the exterior, the architecture itself, reflected this strive for status and positions through visual appearance.

1.4. The organization of this thesis

To understand and interpret visual art, we need tools or concepts with which to describe and analyze the processes and act of making visual art, including the wider context of the art and art-making. This involves an external explanation of art, as opposed to an internal one, where interpretation is cordoned off from the context. Within a structural hermeneutic way of interpreting, visual art is treated more as distinctive, historical realization²⁸ and seen as a visual expression of the society in which it is created. In addition, painters stand in some sort of mutual relation to other painters, consciously or unconsciously. Works of arts are therefore interrelated and connected within *regulated systems of differences and diffusion*, as Bourdieu expressed it,²⁹ within which every work of art is defined and presented.³⁰ What artists have in common is a system of references, which also gives them shared possibilities.³¹

In searching for the social and political reasoning behind the selection of symbols and scenes depicted in art, it is important to include in the analysis the context within which the artist and the patron operate. This would be in line with Bourdieu's idea of a *reduction to*

²⁸ Bourdieu 1996:114.

²⁹ Bourdieu 1996:114, with reference to Michel Foucault *Réponse au cercle d'épistémologie*. Cahiers pour l'analyse, 9, 1968:9-40:40.

³⁰ Bourdieu 1996:114, translated from Norwegian by the author. We are here enclosing semiotic approaches to understanding and interpreting signs.

³¹ Bourdieu 1996:115.

*context*³² and the relation between the society and the cultural works in terms of a *reflecting logic*.³³ With these concepts, Bourdieu wanted to connect the work of art both to the artists and their backgrounds as well as to the intended and real audience. Within this tradition, we see for instance politically inspired analyses,³⁴ which interpret art more as an expression of the taste or interest of certain social classes.

In relating art to a political and social context, a relevant concept is *visual communication*. In what way is the message of visual art communicated to the readers? This requires a more semiotic approach to reading and understanding visual art. Although semiotics is partly based on a close reading of signs, semiotic concepts should help build some sort of bridge between an iconographic reading of art and the context.

It is worth noting that too strong a focus on the functions of the fresco might distract us from the fresco's own internal logic. The visual expression is, in this case, the most important manifestation of the processes and logic behind and intentions attached to the work of art.

In the next chapter I present the iconography of the Chiari fresco. In chapter three I specify and discuss my interrelated perspectives in interpreting the iconography, both in terms of textual sources and contextual dimensions. In chapter four and five I interpret the different symbols and motifs of the fresco in relation to these perspectives. The fresco in terms of visual communication will be discussed in chapter six. Finally in chapter seven, I sum up the main question of the thesis; asking to what extent and in what way the Chiari fresco, *The Apotheosis of Marc Antonio II Colonna*, derived from a social and political reasoning?

³² Bourdieu 1996:116.

³³ Bourdieu 1996:116.

³⁴ This relate to as different authors as Lukacs, Goldmann and Adorno, see also Bourdieu 1996:117.

2. The apotheosis of Marc Antonio II Colonna.

In this chapter I will describe the fresco by Chiari and provide an introduction to its iconography. This includes commenting on the composition.

2.1. Description and iconography

The fresco contains several connected scenes; a large one in the middle and four accompanying scenes, one along each side.³⁵

In the centre we see a nearly divine light. As if emerging from the light, a woman is seated on a golden chair. In her right hand she holds a snake biting itself in the tail. This circle symbol is nearly in the middle of the sharp, dazzling light. With her left hand the woman is pointing at an empty chair, smaller than her own chair, on her left hand side. On her right hand side sit at least seven men,³⁶ dressed in classical antique costumes with laurel wreaths on their heads.

Below this scene, on the right hand side of the seated woman, we see two men. One is dressed like a classical antique hero, with a red banner around his shoulders and a cuirass. He is holding a club, or wooden hammer, the symbol of *Hercules*. He is represented as rather young. Next to him is a mature, bearded and naked man, with just a lion skin over his shoulder. He holds the classically dressed man in his left hand while he is lifting his right hand towards the seated woman, as if he is presenting the young man to her. He is looking at the classically dressed man. The young man's glance is lifted up towards the seated woman and the almost divine, dazzling light, as if he is ascending towards the empty chair and into the light.

The young man in the classical antique costume is Marc Antonio II Colonna, the family hero of the House of Colonna from the *Battle of Lepanto* in 1571. He is lead by *Hercules* we assume that from the lion skin and the club, which are now in the hands of Marc Antonio. The seated woman has been suggested to be the *Queen of heaven*.³⁷ However, as Strunck claims, the woman lacks every attribute of a Madonna.³⁸ In accordance with Pascoli's theory,³⁹ Strunck suggests that the woman is a symbol of immortality,⁴⁰ because of the snake

³⁵ See illustration 1.

³⁶ The men are almost formed like a group and therefore difficult to count precisely.

³⁷ Kerber 1968.

³⁸ Strunck 2007:340.

³⁹ Pascoli 1730:213.

she holds in her hand.⁴¹ Pascoli asserts that *gli cadde in mente d'effigiarvi D. Marcantonio Colonna condotto da Ercole all'immortalità con molti altri eroi*.⁴² Interpreted as *Immortality*, the woman is ready to give Marc Antonio a place among the immortals.⁴³

Strunck interprets the representation of Marc Antonio in this position as *the new Hercules*.⁴⁴ She asserts that Chiari makes a parallel between Marc Antonio and the antique hero, visualized by the hammer in his hand. The very fact that Marc Antonio is holding the club of *Hercules* might signify that he is the inheritor of *Hercules*.⁴⁵ *Hercules* was also immortalized because of his virtues and this parallel is symbolically important. However, Marc Antonio is not guided to a pagan god, but to a seat next to a small circle of men. The group of classically dressed men next to *Immortality* follows her right hand with their eyes, as if they are curious about who will be given immortality next. They do not look down at Marc Antonio. Strunck identifies the group as *den Kreis der verdientesten Helden*.⁴⁶ In this, Strunck build her interpretation on Pascoli, who suggest that the circle of men around *Immortality* is to be regarded as *heroes*.⁴⁷

Hovering over Marc Antonio we see a woman with a palm in her left hand and a laurel wreath in her right hand.⁴⁸ She represents *Victory*,⁴⁹ and she is ready to crown Marc Antonio with the laurel wreath. Next to Marc Antonio, a woman is holding two trumpets, blowing one of them. She represents *Fama*, and announces Marc Antonio's fame.

Three of the four cardinal virtues in the fresco take their seat in the middle of the fresco. We see them next to the chair made ready for Marc Antonio. *Justitia* holds a weight in her right hand and *fascēs*⁵⁰ in her left. *Prudentia* is sitting next to her, with the mirror and the

⁴⁰ Strunck 2007:340.

⁴¹ Chiari here follows the iconography as it is defined by Ripa 1611/1976:242.

⁴² *It comes to mind [that the] depiction (portrayal) [of] Marc Antonio Colonna behaves (leads) as a giant of Immortality with many other heroes*, Pascoli 1730:213.

⁴³ In the fresco *Divine Knowledge* by Andrea Sacchi, in Palazzo Barberini, painted 1629-33, a woman with a snake biting itself in the tail is presented as the virtue of *Eternity*. We see the same in Vasari's *Sala dei Cento Giorni* in Palazzo Cancellaria, where *Eternity* is among the virtues represented. It might therefore be possible to read what is presented here as *Immortality* as a virtue, with reference to eternity. On the other side, *Immortality* in this fresco by Chiari is more likely to be read as a positive reward for Marc Antonio, for his achievements at the *Battle of Lepanto*, than as virtue connected to him.

⁴⁴ Strunck 2007:340.

⁴⁵ Strunck 2007:340. Strunck asserts that Marc Antonio already in the main gallery, in the fresco by Coli and Gherardi, see chapter 5.3.2, is represented as the new *Hercules*. See Strunck 2007, chapter VI.5 and VII.3.

⁴⁶ *A circle of meritorious heroes*, Strunck 2007:340. In her text, Roettgen gives a slightly different identification, when she refers to these men as *commanders*, Roettgen 2007:230. For further interpretation and identification of the group of men, see chapter 4.

⁴⁷ Pascoli 1730:213, see note 42.

⁴⁸ See illustration 4.

⁴⁹ The attributes is the same as presented in Ripa 1611/1976:546.

⁵⁰ *Fascēs* are a bundle of rice which was used by the *Liktorer* (from Latin *likor*, to *bind*) in for instance processions to keep people away from the senators.

snake. *Temperantia* is mixing wine with water. *Fortitudo* is represented in the lower register, embracing a column, both attributes of *Fortitudo*⁵¹ as well as the heraldic symbol of the Colonna family.⁵² On the other side of the column, bound to it by a thick chain, we see *Chronos*, representing destiny. He holds a sickle and is almost whirling back, as Marc Antonio is ascending on a large dark cloud.⁵³

The allegories characterize the virtues and achievements of Marc Antonio. The fact that *Fortitudo* is embracing the attribute of the family, the *column*, might signify that *Fortitudo* or strength for instance in war, is a quality both of Marc Antonio and the Colonna family.⁵⁴ This strength assured Marc Antonio's victory at Lepanto and thus brought about his success. But this was not the only virtue Marc Antonio possessed. The presence of *Prudentia* tells us about his intelligence, that he was able to use past experience as a lead and guide to the future.⁵⁵ This he does with a highly developed sense of fairness, indicated by the representation of *Justitia*. This is relevant both in relation to *Victory*, but also in showing his ability to lead an army. For a military leader and a leader in peace, a sense of realism is also important in calculating risks and dangers. That Marc Antonio should be thought of as a sober and temperate leader comes to mind by the representation of *Temperantia*.

According to this interpretation, it was the virtues of his intelligence (*Prudentia*), sobriety (*Temperantia*), his sense of fairness (*Justitia*) and strength (*Fortitudo*), which brought about and for a great part assured Marc Antonio's success.

If we continue to read the fresco from the north, we find many references to the Turks and to the battle and victory at Lepanto. The Turks are represented with bodies close to the edge of the fresco, some shown just partly.⁵⁶ One is shown almost in full size, stretching a hand upwards, as if protecting himself against Marc Antonio. We see lances, cuirasses, trumpets, shields and red plumage. There are also weapons, a gun, cannon, and axes. The flag, a hat with a blue plume, and a Turkish lance with the moon symbol are also represented.⁵⁷

Along the north and south sides respectively, we find two large figural groups. To the north, a female representation of the Church of Rome is seated in a golden ecclesiastical

⁵¹ See for instance Ripa 1611/1976:179-182. See also section 6.3 and note 407.

⁵² See illustration 5.

⁵³ Strunck asserts that the sickle is broken and that he cries this to Marc Antonio, Strunck 2007:340. I will return to the interpretation of *Chronos* later in chapter 6.2.

⁵⁴ As we will see in section 6.3, the column is also the attribute of *Costanza* and *Sicurtà*, according to Ripa 1618/1986, volume I:100-101, and Ripa 1618/1986, volume II:169-170. These are also qualities the Colonna family might have wanted to be associated with through the use of the column.

⁵⁵ This interpretation of Prudentia refers to her mirror. It is interesting to note that Marc Antonio, then aged 35, was not a very experienced commander of an army, Konstam 2003:14.

⁵⁶ See illustration 5.

⁵⁷ See illustration 6.

dress.⁵⁸ She holds a church building in her left hand, and a censer, for use in the Lord's supper, in her right hand. She is looking at Marc Antonio. Next to the Church we see a nude male, holding an oar with rush in his hair. He is leaning towards a tipped jar with water flowing out of it. Next to him we see a wolf together with two children, familiar to us as *Romulus* and *Remus*.⁵⁹ This direct reference to Rome might be connected to the Colonna family in general, but also perhaps to the nude male, in helping to identify him as *Tibern*.⁶⁰

On the other side we find a group of five.⁶¹ In the middle a young nude male with white wings and a laurel of flowers on his head is sitting on different sorts of warfare equipment. All of these instruments, such as a battering ram formed like a he-goat head,⁶² a shield and a star-hammer,⁶³ refer to warfare. The young man is identified by Strunck as *Genio militare*, the guardian spirit of war.⁶⁴ *Genio militare* is sitting in profile, but his head is turned forward. He holds a staff in each hand. The one he holds in his left hand has a badge saying *SPQR*, which means *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, Latin for *The Senate and the people of Rome*, referring to the government of the ancient Roman Republic. This stick has an eagle, the symbol of the Roman emperor, on top.⁶⁵ The stick he holds in his right hand has circle motives, repeated five times. On top is an outstretched hand inside a circle. Both sticks also have red, blowing strings attached, perhaps a symbol of victory.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ See illustration 7.

⁵⁹ See illustration 6.

⁶⁰ An oar was usually meant to represent the *Gods of the seas*, as for instance in *The Rape of Europe* by Noël Nicolas Coypel, 1727, now in Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, where one of the dolphins pulling Neptune's chariot holds an oar while a *rush* was to be associated with Gods for the rivers, as for instance in the hair of *The Ganges*, 1651, as part of the *Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi* by Gianlorenzo Bernini at Piazza Navona

⁶¹ See illustration 8.

⁶² Used for smashing in doors.

⁶³ Used by security watchmen.

⁶⁴ Strunck 2007: 341, with references to Ripa *Iconologia, divisa in 3 libri ne i quali si esprimono varie imagine di virtù, vitij, passioni humane, affetti, atti, disciplini humori elementi, corpi celesti, provincie d'Italia, fiumi, & altre materie infinite utili ad ogni stato di persone. Ampliata dal ig. Gio. Zaratino Castellini*, Venedig 1669:241 and Okayama 1992:105. Ripa operates with different types of *Genio*. In the Italian version of the *Iconologia*, from 1624:273, referred to in Okayama 1992:105, Ripa defines at least three types of *Genio*. One of them fits the character in Chiari's fresco. This is a *Genio* defined as a nude boy with books, musical instruments or weapons, with wings at his shoulders. It is reasonable to assume that it is this *Genio* Strunck defines as a *Genio militare*, a term I will adopt in this study. In Okayama 1992:105, Okayama systemizes the different *Genio* as they are defined by Ripa, in different editions of his *Iconologia*.

⁶⁵ According to Webster, the eagle was common to all Roman legions, Webster 1969:137.

⁶⁶ The red colour might also be a symbol of sacrifice and love, through the colour of the flame and blood, see Shepherd and Shepherd 2002:343. In this context, the use of the red colour of the strings of the staffs held by *Genio militare* might refer to the sacrifices made by Marc Antonio in the struggle for victory.

Both staffs have connections to *Roman Standards* or *Signa* used by the antique Roman emperors. They performed a dual function for fighting army units, both as a *recognition signal and a rallying-point*.⁶⁷ These

*Signa bilden während des langdauernden Handgemenges die Stützpunkte der Unterabtheilungen um welche sich die Kämpfer ordnen, und indem der Feldherr ihre Bewegungen im Gefechte regelt, gelingt ihm die Leitung der Masse nach einem einheitlichen Plane.*⁶⁸

Von Domaszewski defines the *Signa* further as *die festen Stützpunkte der Schlachtlinie zu bilden*.⁶⁹ For leading the troops in battle it was important that the *Signa* was visible.

When it comes to the meanings of the symbols of the *Signa* themselves, both Webster⁷⁰ and von Domaszewski⁷¹ assert that there are some gaps in the knowledge. This is the case with the circle forms on one of the *Signas*.⁷² One possible interpretation of the hand in the top circle is that it originally was a sign of fidelity to the legion and its commander.⁷³

The four continents are represented around *Genio militare*.⁷⁴ *Europe* is the most conspicuous, both in placement, size and by the fact that *Genio militare* is turned towards her with his body, although looking in the direction of the audience. *Europe* is also dressed in a light, brown-red dress with yellow-green drapery. This makes *Europe* the most central of the continents in this representation. *Europe* is represented as almost protecting the crowns and tiaras of Europe. We see two different crowns symbolizing the princes and kings of Europe

⁶⁷ Webster 1969:134. All military troops during the Roman classical antique period had their *standard*. These *standards* were very important for the troops and highly esteemed as war booty. The *standards* were often held in front when Roman troops entered the battles.

⁶⁸ [These] *signas* constituted the strongpoint for the subdivision that organized the contending parties during prolonged battles, also the commander's deployments in the battle, and brought him success in leading the masses after a consistent plan, Von Domaszewski 1885:2.

⁶⁹ [The *Signa*] formed the steady strongpoint in the battle line, Von Domaszewski 1885:2.

⁷⁰ Webster 1969:136.

⁷¹ Von Domaszewski 1885: 50-3.

⁷² Von Domaszewski claim that for *die Erklärung des stehenden Schmuckes der Signa, jener Schreiben mit dem Buckel in der Mitte und dem aufgetriebenen Rande, hat man davon auszugehen, dass sie in der Form genau übereinstimmen mit dem bekannten Militärorden, der phalera, wenn diese nicht mit Reliefs geschmückt ist* Von Domaszewski 1885:51. In English: *The explanation of the standing decoration [the "jeweller" or in this case, more precisely the "disc"] of the Signa, with the bulge in the middle, and the swollen edge, as one would expect, that the form is in accordance with the famous military order of the "phalera", when this is not decorated with reliefs.*

⁷³ With reference to the Trajan column in Rome, von Domaszewski asserts that the *diese Hand am Signum mit den Beinamen der Legion in Verbindung zu bringen und in ihr das Symbol der Fides zu erkennen* 1885:53. In English: *this hand on the Signum is set in connection with the nickname of the legion and in this [we] recognize the symbol of fidelity.*

⁷⁴ The attributes of the four continents are in some degree related to the codification done by Ripa 1618/1986, volume II, pp 59-66.

and the honorary sign of the Church of Rome, the papal tiara around which *Europe* is almost wrapping her dress.⁷⁵ This protective gesture might be addressed to the other continents, as if she is protecting the princes and kings of Europe as well as the pope against them. She looks at *Genio militare*, and in her tender and grateful glance we might see thankfulness, as if she trusts him for her safety. Around the feet of *Europe* is shown a lot of instruments of art and science. This might be interpreted as signs of a cultivated society.

America is represented as almost nude, with only a piece of cloth around his waist. He is at the same size as *Europe*, but placed behind the back of *Genio militare*, turning his head towards him. His nudity gives him a more primitive expression, compared to Europe's.⁷⁶ *America* is represented as a male with an Indian headdress, holding a bow and arrow, casting an uneasy glance towards *Genio militare*. *Asia*, which is placed farthest off from *Genio militare*, is represented in a simple, blue-grey dress. *Asia* is shown as a female with a wreath of flowers on her head and a smoking vessel with incense in her hands. Her glance is directed upwards, as if following the smoke. As it rises to the sky, the smoke could be seen as a medium through which the prayers of the devoted can ascend to God.⁷⁷ *Africa* has the least conspicuous position of the four continents. He is only partly visible in the back, between *Europe* and *Genio militare*, represented with dark skin and with his eyes, shining white, directed towards *Genio militare*. Only nude skin is visible for us.

The four continents are also represented by a typical animal, one animal for each continent. *Europe* is represented by the horse, *America* the eagle, *Africa* the snake and *Asia* the camel.⁷⁸ By including all continents with *Genio militare* in the middle, the victory at Lepanto could be interpreted in a *cosmic context*.

⁷⁵ The fresco contains an *open crown*, referring to the princes of Europe, a *closed crown*, with its tines bent, referring to the kings, and a papal tiara, see Neubecker 1990:178-79. Chiari used the same two crowns and the papal tiara in his fresco *Apollo in the Chariot of the Sun Surrounded by Seasons* from 1693, in the Prince Taddeo's wing in Palazzo Barberini, Rome, see illustration 10.

⁷⁶ The clothes were important in differentiating the four continents in terms of development during the baroque and post-baroque époque. *Europe* was the most developed after the standards of the 17th and 18th century and is mainly represented fully dressed, often in elegant clothes. Second come *Asia*, perhaps because of the import of important goods as incenses. *America* and *Africa* were regarded as the most primitive ones and often represented as almost nude.

⁷⁷ Shepherd and Shepherd 2002:31. This is perhaps a reasonable interpretation when it comes to the incense.

⁷⁸ In Ripa 1618/1986, volume II, pp 59-61, *Europe* is illustrated both with the papal tiara and the crowns of the princes in Europe and a horse. Also the technical instruments around the feet of *Europe* are represented in Ripa, Ripa 1618/1986, volume II, pp 59-61. In the representation of *Asia*, Ripa uses the camel and the incense burner with smoke, Ripa 1618/1986, volume II, pp 61-62. Ripa represents *Africa* by a lion and three snakes. Here Chiari chose only one snake, Ripa 1618/1986, volume II, pp. 62-64. The reason for this departure from Ripa might be compositional, in that *Africa* is placed behind the group. It might also be that the lion is not easily seen from the floor. When it comes to *America*, Chiari also uses much of the same symbolism as represented in Ripa's iconology, where a female is holding an arrow and a bow together with an eagle, Ripa 1618/1986, volume II, pp. 64-66.

A female figure in white, with large wings, is represented on the western side of the fresco.⁷⁹ Her glance is turned towards Marc Antonio, while she sits writing in a large book on a table. A lot of randomly placed books lies on the table. Strunck sees the seated lady as a possible new *Fama*, writing Marc Antonio's name into history.⁸⁰ Another interpretation sees the seated lady as *History* herself.⁸¹ She writes *Marc Antonio II Colonna* and the year *MDCC* on the front page, and the whole scene might be intended to underline the importance of the role of Marc Antonio, as his name is written into the history. Perhaps his history is seen as so important that all the other books of history have almost blown away, on the floor. Next to the seated woman is another female representation, dressed in blue, with a laurel wreath on her head and a harp in her lap. She turns towards the writing lady. Roettgen interprets her to be a *muse*⁸² guarding the writing of *History* with acceptance. As if both to protect and accept, the fingers on her right hand are outstretched as she holds her hand above the table where *History* sits writing. The *muse* could also be interpreted as about to sing a hymn, a song of praise, for the hero, as Strunck sees her,⁸³ or her intention might be to broadcast Marc Antonio's reputation. Next to the lady in blue sits a swan. In this connection the swan could be interpreted as a symbol of *music*,⁸⁴ that is, music as a way to celebrate a hero.

The heraldic emblem of the Colonna family, the column, is represented three times in the fresco. One crowned column is included in the scene with *Fortitudo*⁸⁵ and *Chronos*. In addition, the column is represented in a more subtle way in the coat of arms used as a decoration in two of the four corners.⁸⁶ These two columns are represented with three prows on each side and three anchors placed on the column itself. These columns are also crowned.

⁷⁹ See illustration 9.

⁸⁰ Strunck 2007:340.

⁸¹ Roettgen 2007:230, with reference to Ripa, *Iconologia overo descrizione di diverse imagini cavate dell'antichità, e di propria inventione* (1593). Reprint of the Rome 1603 edition. Edited by Erna Mandowsky. Hildesheim 1970, or *Clio* as the Muse for history, Hall 1974:217.

⁸² Possible *Calliope*, Roettgen 2007:230. *Calliope* is the *Muse* for epic poem, Hall 1974:217. See also Strunck 2007:340 note 141.

⁸³ Strunck 2007:340. Strunck see the three attributes, the lyre, the laurel wreath and the swan in connection with the three Muses *Clio* for history, *Erato* for lyric and *Calliope* for epic poem. See also Hall 1996:217. *Erato* is excluded in this context. Strunck finds the presence of *Calliope* more reasonable, both because of her enthusiastic glance and that writing instruments is her attribute.

⁸⁴ Ripa 1611/1976:366, and Strunck 2007:340, note 141.

⁸⁵ In Ripa 1611/1976:179, as mentioned, the column is also one of the attributes of *Fortezza*, *Fortezza* is Italian for the Latin *Fortitudo*. See illustration 5. Nevertheless, Ripa 1618/1986, volume I:168-170, does not mention the column as one of the attributes of *Fortezza*. This indicates that Ripa is not consistent in his representation of the different allegories. I will return to this in section 6.3.

⁸⁶ Each corner contains some sort of medallion for decoration. See illustration 11.

Used in this way, the columns are also called *Columna rostrata*, a classical antique symbol of victory.⁸⁷

The *Columna Rostrata* as a symbol is closely connected to Marc Antonio Colonna. After the victory at the *Battle of Lepanto* in 1571, he adopted the *Columna Rostrata* as his personal emblem.⁸⁸ On occasion, he also used the symbol to show his gratitude to the Church. In December 1571 he brought a *Columna Rostrata*, made of silver for a thanksgiving mass in St. Maria in Aracoeli in Rome. Von Pastor writes on this occasion: *Bei der Dankmesse brachte Colonna* (i.e. Marc Antonio, author's remark) *eine fast vier Fuss hohe silberne Columna rostrata, Christo victori, als Weihegeschenk dar.*⁸⁹

In the two other corners we see laurel branches in a frame of coats of arms. In front of the *Columna rostrata* in the north east corner sits a white dove with an olive branch in the beak. This might be a symbol of peace. The fact that the dove is placed in front of the *Columna rostrata* favours this interpretation.⁹⁰

2.2. The composition of the fresco, some short remarks

The composition of the fresco has implications for the interpretation of the content. Therefore, I will shortly conclude this chapter with some short remarks on the composition.

First, the scenes are organized by the use of architectural elements imitating marble. Foreshortening walls along all four sides lead illusorily towards an open heaven, while a cornice is concluding the walls. In the corners are large imitations of sculptures and volutes. The scenes along the four sides, with the beaten Turks, the bounded *Chronos*, the seated *Church*, *Genio Militare*, the four continents and *History* are all placed along these

⁸⁷ The prows or *rostra*, Latin for *prow*, of defeated ships were, according to Aiken, often *brought back to Rome as trophies in antiquity, and rostra were later added to monumental columns to signify naval victory*, Aiken 1980:594. Fragments of a *Rostral column* were in 1565 discovered in the Forum. They were identified by an inscription to be fragments of a victory monument built to honour Gaius Duilius, who was the commander of the Roman fleet in the first victory over the Carthaginians at Egadi in 241 B.C, Aiken 1980:594. The *Columna Rostrata* was used as a symbol of honour to commemorate Roman naval victories or *the antique triumphal totems of naval victory*, according to Leuschner 1999: 619. The history and the functions of the Roman *Columna Rostrata* were well known in the Italian renaissance, Leuschner 1999:619. One of the most famous was the *Column rostrata* of Aemilius Paulus which was located at the Capitoline Hill. The prows of the ship gave the name to the *Rostra* close by in the Forum, Leuschner 1999:619. The *Rostra* was the platform in the Forum where speakers could address the people. See also Fischer 1969:369-87, where Fischer gives a typology of the *Columna Rostrata* and illustrates it with examples.

⁸⁸ Aiken 1980:594.

⁸⁹ *To the [thanks]mass Colonna brought an almost four feet high silver Columna Rostrata, Christi victory, as an offering gift.* Pastor 1958:599.

⁹⁰ The dove with the olive branch is also the symbol of the Pamphilj family and Filippo II Colonna who ordered this fresco, did marry a member of the Pamphilj family in 1697, Olympia Pamphilj (1672-1751) after the death of his first wife, Lorenza de la Cerda (ca.1669-97). The Dove with the olive branch could therefore be a gesture to his wife and his new family in law.

architectural elements. The use of imitated walls gives the fresco an illusion of depth towards the open heaven in the centre and contributes to the space directed towards infinity. This serves to give the figures in the middle, with Marc Antonio as the leading figure, and *Immortality*, a more prominent position in relation to the persons on the four sides. This impression is strengthened by the almost dazzling middle light.

Further, there might be a strengthening of the connection between the *Church* and *Europe* in that they are mirrored on the south and north sides of the fresco respectively. A line passes between these two through the laurel wreath of *Fama*, the seat of *Immortality*, the empty chair ready for Marc Antonio and *Justitia*.

There is also extensive use of clouds in the fresco. The centralized groups, with *Immortality*, the seated men next to her, the virtues and Marc Antonio are all lifted by clouds coloured in different degrees of shades. These persons have no visible connection with the building elements. The cloud carrying Marc Antonio is darkish and so are the clouds right above the bounded *Chronos* and the column. The clouds get gradually lighter towards *Immortality* and the heroes next to her and strengthen the impression of an almost celestial vision. In this way Marc Antonio is represented as taking steps upwards, starting from a position on a dark cloud and moving towards a seat on a white one in the almost divine light. This movement from a dark cloud to a lighter one both underlines Marc Antonio's ascent and his *transformation* into a hero. It could also be a way to emphasize the sharpness of the light, as both the persons and the clouds are more enlightened the closer they get to the centre of the fresco. This might be the reason why the cloud lifting the seated *Church* is represented as darker, as if in the shadow of the bright light in the middle.

In this way, the clouds might not only be means of support for some of the characters in the fresco, but also instruments for defining functionality.⁹¹ By lifting the characters, the clouds serve to define the main persons and consequently, also the theme of the fresco. At the same time, the use of clouds contributes to a greater extent of gradation and variety. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the *Church of Rome* is the only one of the scenes along the four sides of the fresco which is represented on a cloud. This gives the *Church* a more prominent position compared to the other groups and persons represented along the sides of the fresco, which are placed directly on the architectural elements.

⁹¹ See Damisch and his treatment of the clouds by Correggio in the dome of San Giovanni, 1520-24, in Parma. Damisch 2002:3.

To sum up, we see that the two scenes in the main west east axe of the fresco⁹² testify or validate Marc Antonio's immortal reputation by referring to the *Battle of Lepanto* and his name being written into history. The north and south sides respectively testify why Marc Antonio deserves such a reputation.⁹³ On the one side, it is through affecting the whole cosmic order, bringing peace and harmony among the continents, and on the other side, it is through his support to the Church of Rome. In the middle scene Marc Antonio gets his reward, as he is glorified by *Immortality*. *In ascending, Marc Antonio moves from the secular sphere to an immortal and divine one. The first sphere represents the glory achieved through his brave deeds, the latter the honour conferred.*

⁹² You enter the room from the large gallery in the west.

⁹³ See Strunck 2007:341.

3. Perspectives in understanding and interpreting visual art in terms of social and political ends

How are we then to interpret the content of the fresco in terms of the Colonna's social and political situation and aspirations? In this thesis I will interpret the iconography of the fresco in the light of textual sources and different contextual aspects, before I discuss the selection and ordering of symbols and scenes as ways of visually communicating an intended message. It is not my intention to fully develop and discuss the potential of these perspectives, but rather to use them as supplementary approaches to illustrating and understanding the content of the fresco.

First, I will look at some aspects of an iconographic and iconological approach to art, with references to Warburg and Panofsky. A central focus in the German school of iconology, including Warburg and Panofsky, was the contextual understanding of art. To stress the relationship between the development of the fresco and its surroundings, I will therefore pay special attention to contextual perspectives. Third, I need concepts for describing how symbols and scenes in visual art are read and perceived by the audience or the readers in terms of visual communication. This also might be seen as aspects of an iconological analysis.⁹⁴ Signs in art could generate their own context.

Before my own discussion of art in relation to these approaches, I will first review the analytical perspectives of earlier studies of Chiari's fresco.

3.1. The Chiari fresco: State of research

The study by Roettgen⁹⁵ and in some senses also the one by Strunck⁹⁶ stress the iconography of the frescoes as their point of view. Especially Roettgen bases her study to a great extent on a description and partly an identification of the different elements and gives more of an introduction to the frescoes of the *Galleria Colonna*. In the case of Strunck, it would be more appropriate to talk about a combined iconographic and contextual approach, in that she discusses in general terms the whole fresco programme in the *Galleria Colonna* in relation to the social and political history of the Colonna family during the second half of the

⁹⁴ This indicates how interrelated the perspectives are. The reason to present them separately here, is therefore more of convenience than of substance.

⁹⁵ Roettgen 2007:224-245.

⁹⁶ Strunck 2007. Strunck uses several approaches in her large study of the Palazzo Colonna, also in the study of the Chiari fresco.

17th century.⁹⁷ Neither Roettgen nor Strunck place the Chiari fresco in an art historical framework based on, for instance, concepts of style or the influence of other artists. Nor do they focus on interpreting the symbols and scenes explicitly in terms of political or social ambitions. This is particularly the case with Roettgen's study. When it comes to Strunck's analysis of the other frescoes in the *Galleria Colonna*, especially the ones by Coli and Gherardi in the main hall, she connects selected symbols to contextual political relations.

I will also combine an iconographic and a contextual approach in this study. But where Strunck discusses the fresco programme of the whole gallery in more general terms, I will limit my analysis the Chiari fresco. Through an analysis of selected symbols and scenes in this fresco, my focus is in what way the House of Colonna might be said to pursue their social and political ends at the time.⁹⁸ My contextual perspective also has a somewhat different focus from that of Strunck's presentation. Although I discuss the general social and political situation in Rome and of the Colonna family during the 17th century, in establishing a contextual understanding of the fresco, I will also discuss the iconography in relation to other Roman fresco cycles and stress the communication between the elements of the fresco and the reader. Neither of these elements were addressed in Strunck's analysis.

Kerber's article about Chiari is iconographic as well when it comes to the fresco in the *Galleria Colonna*. There are some discrepancies between Kerber and Strunck in identifying the personalities in the fresco.⁹⁹ It is worth noting that Kerber's article deals more with Chiari's production in general, and does not give an analysis of any specific works. In this way, the article is far more superficial about the Chiari fresco than the thorough study made by Strunck.

3.2 Iconographical and iconological approaches

Since I shall be leaning on a close reading of the monument in question as well as a contextualization in this study, methodologically I shall rely on an iconographic perspective to understand art, but also elements of what is called an iconological perspective, developed

⁹⁷ Strunck has an extensive discussion of the history of the Colonna family in general, but not directly related to the fresco by Chiari, Strunck 2007.

⁹⁸ Strunck infers from her own description of the family history, which emphasize the social aspects, to the intentions of the Colonna family in deciding upon the embellishment programme. There is nothing in her inquiry into the family archives that can prove such a connection. It would also be a difficult connection to establish or prove scientifically. In that case, it had to be a note, letter or contract indicating the intention of the Colonna family at that time. So far this has not been found, even if Strunck have done an impressive work in the archives of the Colonna family at the monastery of Subiaco.

⁹⁹ This has already shortly been commented in chapter 2.

most explicitly by Panofsky.¹⁰⁰ He defined three stages or levels of an iconographic and an iconological analysis and methodology in his search for the intrinsic meaning or content of art.¹⁰¹ On what Panofsky called the pre-iconographic level, the focus is on an enumeration of *primary or natural subject matter, subdivided into factual and expressional*.¹⁰² These set of *pure forms* would carry *primary or natural meanings* and constitute the *artistic motifs*.¹⁰³ In the second stage or strata, the focus is on *secondary or conventional subject matter*.¹⁰⁴ In this *iconographic*¹⁰⁵ part of the analysis, we *connect artistic motifs and combinations of artistic motifs (compositions) with themes or concepts*.¹⁰⁶ In this we identify the images, stories or allegories of a given piece of art. The third stage is the iconological analysis, where the intrinsic meaning or content of art is searched. According to Panofsky, it is *apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class [...] condensed into one work*.¹⁰⁷

To understand the fresco by Chiari as a document of the 17th century society, we deal with a work of art as a symptom of this society. Accordingly, the compositional and iconographical features of the fresco becomes in a way *evidence* of this society. The interpretation of the *symbolical* values in the fresco becomes the object of what Panofsky calls *iconology*,¹⁰⁸ as opposed to *iconography*.¹⁰⁹

For Panofsky, art was one of several expressions in which the *basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion*¹¹⁰ reveals itself. In conceiving the pure forms of a piece of art, the *motifs, images, stories and allegories as*

¹⁰⁰ Panofsky discuss this most extensively in his book; *Meaning in the Visual Arts* from 1955.

¹⁰¹ Panofsky 1955:28-31.

¹⁰² Panofsky 1955:28.

¹⁰³ Panofsky 1955:28.

¹⁰⁴ Panofsky 1955:28.

¹⁰⁵ The suffix *-graphy* means *writing* or a *field of study* and is inherited from the Latin *-graphia* and denotes something descriptive, Panofsky 1955:32.

¹⁰⁶ Panofsky 1955:29.

¹⁰⁷ Panofsky 1955:30. According to Holly, Panofsky's ideas grew out of the epistemological field created by historians of culture as for instance Hegel, see Holly 1984:27. Panofsky, in Holly's interpretation, *took from Hegel [...] his commitment to a historical understanding derived from a study of meaningful context*, Holly 1984:30. When Panofsky relates his idea about the intrinsic meaning of art to the underlying principles revealing the basic attitude of a nation etc, this might be interesting to relate to the concept of *Spirit* in the writings of Hegel. In *Reason in History*, 1837/1953:89-90, Hegel writes that the *spirit of a people [...] is a definite spirit which builds itself up in an objective world. This world, then, stands and continues in its religion, its cult, its customs, its constitution and political laws, the whole scope of its institutions, its events and deeds. This is its work: this one people*, also cited in Holly 1984:29. Hegel continues, *[t]he spirit of the people, then, enjoys and satisfies itself in its work*, Hegel 1837/1953:90. In this case, art could also be interpreted according to Hegel's philosophy, to contain the spirit of the people, see Hegel 1837/1953:90.

¹⁰⁸ The suffix *logy* is derived from Latin *logos*, meaning *thought* or *reason*. Iconology denotes therefore something interpretative, Panofsky 1955:32.

¹⁰⁹ Panofsky 1955:31. In describing the content of the concept *iconography*, Panofsky says that *iconography* is a *description and classification of images*, Panofsky 1955:31.

¹¹⁰ Panofsky 1939:7

manifestations of underlying principles, Panofsky searched in his approach to *interpret all these elements as symbolical values*.¹¹¹

Panofsky distinguishes iconology from iconography in that *iconology consists of iconography “turned interpretative”*.¹¹² This provides useful analytical concepts for my study of the Chiari fresco. Panofsky’s analytical approach to analyzing the meaning of art is related to the writings of Aby Warburg. More simplified, Warburg explained the term of iconology as *the study and interpretation of historical processes through visual images*.¹¹³ Roskill relates this reading of *visual evidence surviving from the past* to *ideology embodied in the conventions and beliefs or assumptions of a society*, and argues that *a relationship to ideology can equally be found in gestures, costumes, ornament, or building types*.¹¹⁴ In his study of early Renaissance art, Warburg’s preoccupation with artistic choice led him to search for classical antique sources.¹¹⁵ He also investigated the *close tie that binds the work of art to its social context and practical functions*.¹¹⁶

In Gombrich’s biography over Warburg,¹¹⁷ he brings this argument further. He asserts that in understanding Warburg’s iconology, it is important to take into consideration that images also have a psychological and social significance.¹¹⁸ According to Gombrich, Warburg’s iconology aimed at a sensitivity to *social overtones* in the choice of images, which changes with *time and milieu*.¹¹⁹ Warburg’s interest in *social psychology and his belief in the strength of environmental forces* [made him, according to Gombrich] *impatient of any attempt to see the work of art in isolation from its milieu*.¹²⁰

In line with Warburg’s and Panofsky’s approach to understanding art, an iconographic phase must be succeeded by an iconological analysis, where the piece of art is seen in relation to a larger context. In the next section, I will therefore define and discuss further a contextual approach to understanding art.

¹¹¹ Panofsky 1955:31. With the use of the concept “symbolical” values, Panofsky refers to Ernst Cassirer, but without any clear reference to a specific text.

¹¹² Panofsky 1955:32 and Roskill 1989:96.

¹¹³ Roskill 1989:96 with reference to Aby Warburg; *Italianische Kunst und internationale Astrologie in Palazzo Schifanoia* (lecture of 1912), translated as; *Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara* and printed in German Essays on Art History, ed. Gert Schiff, New York 1988:234-54.

¹¹⁴ Roskill 1989:96.

¹¹⁵ See for instance Warburg (1893)1932/1999:89-156.

¹¹⁶ Gertrud Bing in her Editorial Foreword to: *Aby Warburg: The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 1932/1999:81.

¹¹⁷ Gombrich 1970.

¹¹⁸ Gombrich 1970:320.

¹¹⁹ Gombrich 1970: 320.

¹²⁰ Gombrich 1970:319.

3.3. Contextualism as an approach to interpreting the purpose of the fresco

In searching the *intrinsic meaning or content* of art, *context* is a useful concept in the analysis. This concept could be narrowed down in many different ways. In general we seek to reconstruct some of the characteristics of the situation in which the piece of art was created and used.¹²¹ As Rampley asserts in relation to Warburg's dissertation, it *aims to establish the character of a discourse of antiquity in quattrocento Florence [and] to reconstruct a particular sociohistorical cultural milieu.*¹²² Worth noting is that in an analysis of this kind, or of any kind, it is impossible to know and include every possible relevant contextual dimension. Here I will pay special attention to a few selected historical, social and political aspects characterizing the situation in Rome in general and the Colonna family in particular from the second half of the 17th century and onwards, until the time of the creation of the fresco in the year 1700. What social and political questions were at stake in Rome in general and for the House of Colonna in particular, which could be relevant to the creation of the fresco? To what extent is Baxandall's statement about 15th century religious pictures, that they *existed to meet institutional ends, to help with specific intellectual and spiritual activities,*¹²³ valid in this connection, in terms of social and political ambitions? This has been the theme of different studies to have focused on the relation between the development of large fresco cycles in Roman palaces during the high and early post-baroque and the patrons' positions and ambitions.¹²⁴

In analyzing the fresco by Chiari in a social and political context, I approach the research by German historians, mainly done by Wolfgang Reinhard¹²⁵ and Volker Reinhardt,¹²⁶ further developed by Arne Karsten within an art historical context.¹²⁷ One of the theses developed and accentuated by this circle of German nepotist researchers is that nepotism was central in bringing forth the large production of art in Rome in the 16th and 17th centuries. By pursuing their ambitions for status and power, the Kardinalnepoten¹²⁸ made

¹²¹ Aavitsland 2002:24 and Hauknes 2006:16.

¹²² Rampley 1997:44.

¹²³ Baxandall 1988:40.

¹²⁴ See for instance, Oy-Marra 2005, Leone 2008 and Scott 1991.

¹²⁵ Reinhard 1975 and Reinhard 1991.

¹²⁶ See Reinhardt 1996 and Büchel and Reinhardt (Hrsg.) 2001.

¹²⁷ See especially his doctor thesis *Künstler und Kardinäle* from 2003.

¹²⁸ The term *Kardinalnepoten* (*Cardinal-nephew*) was the title of the most prominent position within the Church of Rome in the 16th and 17th centuries, until it was abolished at the turn of the 17th century, held by a close relative of the pope, usually the nephew. As Reinhard describes it, "*As soprintendente dello stato ecclesiastico*" the *Kardinalnepoten* was head of the secretariat of state, and presided over those congregations of cardinals which governed the papal states, the "*consulta*" in particular. Reinhard 1991:334.

enormous investments in the creation of art and architecture. In this way they operated as the most important art commissioners during the baroque.

In his doctoral thesis, however, Karsten argues that so far art historians have not recognized the effect of this extensive art patronage for the development of baroque art.¹²⁹ Karsten identifies three fundamental conditions for the development of art under the *nepoten*¹³⁰ during the baroque.¹³¹ First, their social role as leading figures within a climbing dynasty. As *Kardinalnepoten* they had the most prominent position within the papal family dynasty. Second, Karsten identifies their political function, at least formally, in the centre of a curial ruling organization. And third, the personality of the *Kardinalnepoten* was a precondition for the development of this kind of art.¹³² According to Karsten's argumentation, the fact that the position of the *Kardinalnepoten* lasted just as long as their family pope was alive implied that their position as art protector was threatened over time. Karsten asserts that this is an additional precondition for the development of art during the baroque.¹³³

The essence of Karsten's argumentation is that *art*, supervised by the *Kardinalnepoten* in the 17th century Rome *developed from a political reasoning*. As we shall see later in this thesis, it is a reasonable assumption that in having the responsibility for large embellishment projects for instance in Palazzo Barberini and Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, the *Kardinalnepoten*, through their art, were partly setting the trend for the development of art in Rome. Particularly for the House of Colonna, as a family with high social and political aspirations, these trends were likely to be of great importance for their own embellishment.

This paves the way for taking into account earlier frescoes in the analysis, and to consider the relation between the Chiari fresco and other 16th and 17th centuries Roman frescoes. These frescoes might have inspired Chiari in his work, and I will discuss whether they extend our understanding of the intrinsic meaning of the fresco.

In discussing *context* as a tool for interpreting and understanding the meaning of art, we have to take notice of its dynamic element. What constitutes the relevant *context* in relation to a fresco of this kind, or to any piece of art, is not fixed once and for all, but is actively created and defined by the interpreters. In choosing a more hermeneutic approach to interpreting and understanding art, Baxandall asserts that the *description* and the *explanation*

¹²⁹ Karsten 2003:7.

¹³⁰ *Nepoten* is Italian for *nephew*, in this setting, *the nephew of the pope*. Also other relatives of the pope held important positions in this period.

¹³¹ Karsten 2003:9.

¹³² Karsten 2003:9.

¹³³ Karsten 2003:9.

of the same piece of art interact with each other.¹³⁴ Accordingly, every description implies a certain selection and explanation in relation to the picture. In this way, Baxandall might be said to include an element of hermeneutic in his contextual approach. The content and language of images are seen as depending on the context and the participants' understanding, and therefore changing with time, space and audience. Baxandall introduces the concept of *cognitive style*,¹³⁵ by which he refers to the *interpreting skills one happens to possess, the categories, the model patterns and the habits of inference and analogy*.¹³⁶ This will be important in determining our interpretation of a piece of art. Here we touch upon the question of visual communication.

In his theoretical approach, Baxandall states that *historical objects may be explained by treating them as solutions to problems in situations, and by reconstructing a rational relationship between these three*.¹³⁷ This may seem as a simple, but also rational model to understand the conditions which has led to the production of the Chiari fresco. How could we see the fresco as a *solution to problems* within the Colonna family in a given *situation*? By approaching the process of interpretation in this way, we open for both social and political intentions shaping the fresco. For us, the solution, in the form of the fresco, is visible, but the problem is not, nor is the situation.¹³⁸ Chiari made a selection¹³⁹ from the resources¹⁴⁰ he had available. In this way, rationality is *purposefully at work on circumstances*¹⁴¹ which imbue meaning to the fresco itself. At the same time, the artist could be seen as a compound of *rationality and culture and quiddity*.¹⁴²

An interesting study, done by Haskell,¹⁴³ discusses different aspects of the relationship between artist and patron during the baroque. This includes the importance of the nationality

¹³⁴ Baxandall 1985:1.

¹³⁵ Baxandall 1988:30.

¹³⁶ Baxandall 1988:30.

¹³⁷ Baxandall 1985:35.

¹³⁸ In this, Baxandall led our attention both to *individual facts* and to *general facts*, Baxandall 1985:35.

¹³⁹ Baxandall also define a picture as a volition, which we could refer to as *intentionality* in discussing the movement within his triangle of *re-enactment*, Baxandall 1985:41. In discussing the concept of *intention*, Baxandall also includes the rationality of the institution or of the behaviour that *led to the disposition*, Baxandall 1985:42. *Intention* in Baxandall's discussion refers more to pictures than to painters. But as he says, in *particular cases it will be a construct descriptive of a relationship between a picture and its circumstances*, Baxandall 1985:42.

¹⁴⁰ *Resources* in this connection would both refer to colour and form, and perhaps what we could define as *style*, the habitual form artistically chosen at this time. For the concept of *style*, see also section 3.4.3. Resources could also refer to the *room of action* for Chiari in terms of financial means, which partly would determine his *artistically freedom*. Chiari's *artistically freedom* would nevertheless be rather compounded, depending upon a whole rank of factors. This would also include the content of the contract between the Colonna family and Chiari, which might have given some instructions for the content and form of the fresco.

¹⁴¹ Baxandall 1985:36.

¹⁴² Baxandall 1985:36.

¹⁴³ Haskell 1980.

of the artists in building relations to patrons. Many noble Roman families preferred painters from their homeland.¹⁴⁴ Haskell also goes into the question of contracts, their content and negotiation of the price,¹⁴⁵ and asserts that the most effective way for a patron to stay in control in relation to the artist working for him, was to insist on a preliminary sketch or drawing.¹⁴⁶ In general, we can suppose that the more complex the iconography of a fresco, the more likely the existence of such a preliminary drawing would be.

The way art and architecture during the baroque were used to signalize social status and political power is discussed in several studies.¹⁴⁷ A study by J.B. Scott, which focuses on the painted ceilings of Palazzo Barberini, illustrates this.¹⁴⁸ In his study, which he rhetorically calls *Images of Nepotism*, Scott argues that the central subject in the Barberini family iconography is the theme of divine election.¹⁴⁹ Pope Urban VIII Barberini (1623-1644) wanted to create the impression that he was literally elected by God to rule both the Church and the Papal State.¹⁵⁰ Scott analyses the iconography of the painted ceilings of the palace, among them *Divine Providence* (1632-37) by Pietro da Cortona. It is organized with the heraldic symbol of the Barberini family at the centre. Scott states that the painted ceilings of the Barberini palace reflect *the nepotism and social agenda of the family*.¹⁵¹

Another relevant study is done by S.C. Leone. She analyses and discusses the Palazzo Pamphilj at Piazza Navona in light of constructing identity.¹⁵² Leone argues that both the building and the embellishment inside, especially the *Aeneas cycle* (1651-54) by Pietro da Cortona in the main gallery were motivated by outward appearance during the pontificate of Pope Innocent X Pamphilj (1644-1655). During his period, the palace was remodelled to mirror their new social status. Also the internal organization of space was important in this regard. Waddy illustrates in what way the plan and internal space of the papal family palaces belonging to the Borghese, the Barberini and the Chigi families, were adapted to the

¹⁴⁴ For instance Aldobrandini, Peretti and Borghese did chose Bolognese painters for embellishing their palaces, Haskell 1980:5.

¹⁴⁵ Haskell 1980:8-10.

¹⁴⁶ Haskell 1980:11. According to Haskell, this practice became widespread in the second half of the 17th century in Rome and is particularly associated with the painter Giovanni Battista Gaulli. Giovanni Battista Gaulli was central in decorating Il Gesù from 1672-85, with *Triumph of the Name of Jesus* as one of the most important.

¹⁴⁷ For instance Leone 2008, Oy-Marra 2005, Scott 1991 and Waddy 1990,

¹⁴⁸ Scott 1991.

¹⁴⁹ Scott 1991:5.

¹⁵⁰ Scott 1991:5.

¹⁵¹ Scott 1991:11.

¹⁵² Leone 2008.

requirements of court rituals and social rank.¹⁵³ In this way, the themes of the internal embellishment mirror the functions of the rooms.

It is also important to mention the concept to which we might refer as *style* which will be discussed in section 3.4.2. The habitual form chosen and mediated through earlier and contemporary fellow artists might be part of the context relevant for understanding the behaviour of both the artists and their patrons. I will therefore also relate the fresco to the artistic traditions in the 16th and 17th centuries.

3.4. Communication and rhetoric in art

So far I have discussed both an iconographic reading of visual art and a contextual one. The first focuses on symbols and allegories in art, the second on the situations in which the piece of art is realized and meant to function. In this section I will focus on art as visual communication, understood as the use and organisation of symbols and scenes in order to communicate a certain meaning to the readers.

As early as the emergence of Renaissance humanism in Florence in the beginning of the 15th century, concepts were being developed for the purpose of describing and characterizing the rhetorical aspects of art. A much referenced work in this regard is Leon Battista Alberti's 1435 *De picture*, in where classical rhetoric is applied to art history.¹⁵⁴ With reference to Renaissance studies by Lee¹⁵⁵ and Baxandall,¹⁵⁶ Levy asserts that starting with Alberti, *early modern theory was fundamentally dependent upon rhetorical theory for both the means (expressions, composition) and ends (movere, docere, delectare) of the visual arts.*¹⁵⁷ This use of rhetorical criteria in evaluating art continued after Alberti.¹⁵⁸

The lead from the classical rhetoric as it is classified and discussed by Cicero in *On the Orator* from around 55 B.C.¹⁵⁹ was interpreted by Augustine, who expanded on it in his *De Doctrina Christiana* of 396. This is also relevant when it comes to understanding communication in visual art. Augustine discusses the three functions of eloquence, to *teach*,

¹⁵³ Waddy 1990.

¹⁵⁴ In English translation, *On Painting* 1991, Penguin Books, London. According to Goldstein, the whole organization of *De picture* derives from classical rhetoric, in that it first discusses the elements, then the branches of painting and finally the moral and professional conduct of the painter. Goldstein 1991:643.

¹⁵⁵ Rensselaer W. Lee, 1943/1967: *Ut pictura poesis: Humanistic Theory of Painting*, W.W. Norton, New York.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Baxandall 1971: *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1550-1650*. Herbert Lang, Bern and Frankfurt.

¹⁵⁷ Levy 2004:48.

¹⁵⁸ See Vickers 1988:353, Goldstein refers to theorists like Pino, Dolce and Lomazzo, Goldstein 1991:643.

¹⁵⁹ *On the Orator* or *De Oratore* is a vital text in establishing the ancient Roman rhetorical doctrine. *On the Orator* addresses rhetorical issues in dialogue form, see Cicero 1st. century B.C./1990.

to *delight* and to *sway*,¹⁶⁰ in accordance with Cicero's terminology.¹⁶¹ Augustine gives teaching priority, when he says that:

*teaching your audience is a matter of necessity, delighting them a matter of being agreeable, swaying them a matter of victory [of these three] the one put first, that is the necessity of teaching, is to be found in the things we are saying, the remaining two in the way we say it.*¹⁶²

In the renewal of these thoughts in the early 15th century, the same concepts and understanding of rhetoric were brought into the theory of art by theorists like Alberti and his followers.¹⁶³ Goldstein illustrates how classical rhetoric influenced the whole understanding of history in Vasari's representation of the lives of selected artist in the mid 16th century.¹⁶⁴ According to Goldstein, rhetoric states *that to make a case one must examine the facts and, more important, seek to discover arguments that would win over an audience.*¹⁶⁵ In limiting the concept of *argument*, Goldstein asserts that *an argument is chosen for its proven effectiveness, with the narrative taking shape as such arguments are skilfully arranged.*¹⁶⁶ With its focus on a limited repertory of arguments, classical rhetoric, according to Goldstein, *provides the basis for such a narrative of events, not only shaping reality but moralizing it as well.*¹⁶⁷

The rhetorical dimensions within visual art, especially the ability to teach and to form, were prominent during the Renaissance. These didactic functions of art continued developing during the baroque, as more emphasis was put on moralizing and persuading, but also on delighting.¹⁶⁸ Of the three aims of the orator in classical rhetoric, to *instruct*, to *move* and to *delight*, which had such influence on art theory during the renaissance, decisive significance

¹⁶⁰ Augustine 396/1996:215-218 or Book IV,12,27-14,30.

¹⁶¹ Cicero, *On the orator*, 21, 69: *ut doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat*, referenced in Augustine 396/1996:214 and 215.

¹⁶² Augustine 396/1996: 215 or Book IV,12,27.

¹⁶³ In the mentioned *De pictura* from 1435, see also note 154. Alberti starts the third part of *De pictura* by asserting that the aim of the painter is *to obtain praise, favour and goodwill*, part III:52. See also Barasch 1985:324.

¹⁶⁴ Giorgio Vasari *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori et architettori*, 1550/1568 and Goldstein 1991:645.

¹⁶⁵ Goldstein 1991:645. Goldstein refers to the Cicero's use of the concept *loci* or in English *places*, which according to Goldstein usually is referred to as commonplaces.

¹⁶⁶ Goldstein 1991:645.

¹⁶⁷ Goldstein 1991:646.

¹⁶⁸ Through written texts, the painters are here an important source. Poussin writes for instance in a letter to Frèart de Chambray, dated 1 March 1665, about painting whose *end is to please*, Barasch 1985:324. See also Blunt 1967. Poussin did not write a treatise of his own, but his conversations on art were written down and published in the 17th century. According to Barasch, Poussin's views as an attitude influenced significantly the 17th century art theory, Barasch 1985:323-24.

were given the aim to *move* during the 17th century.¹⁶⁹ This was, for instance, the case for Poussin, who according to Barasch put decisive significance on the paintings' ability to move the beholder.¹⁷⁰ Already the so-called Mannerists appealed directly to the emotions, rather than to the mind.¹⁷¹

Looking at the trends in art during the 16th and 17th centuries, the Jesuits also appealed to the senses for the arousal of religious emotions in their art. They wanted to make religion more accessible, through appealing to the emotions.¹⁷² This emotional kind of religion produced by the Jesuits influenced the development of art. According to Blunt, the whole baroque movement in the 17th century must be associated with the Jesuits. The emotional and ecstatic paintings we find, for instance, in the art of Barocci¹⁷³ *appeal directly to the eye and not to the mind*, as Blunt formulate it.¹⁷⁴

3.4.1. Communication and semiotics

In order to discuss communication by visual means, we need concepts to describe the relation between the work of art and the audience. In that respect, an important vehicle used in several studies¹⁷⁵ is developed within the framework of a semiotic perspective. I will not discuss this perspective in detail, but only use some of its concepts to illustrate possible rhetorical strategies in Chiari's fresco.

Central among the semiotic concepts in relation to visual art are the concepts of *signs* and *codes*. Chandler specifies this, claiming that, *Semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as "signs" in everyday speech, but of anything which "stands for" something else*.¹⁷⁶

Signs have to be read contextually, depending on the code within which they are situated. Codes provide a framework within which signs make sense, some sort of conventions for communication. In order to receive or to understand *signs*, you have to know

¹⁶⁹ Usually 17th century art has been regarded as rhetorical, although Cropper and Dempsey claim that little has been done to substantiate this statement, Cropper and Dempsey 1987:506. See also Levy 2004:48, note 38, page 258.

¹⁷⁰ Barasch 1985:325.

¹⁷¹ Blunt 1967:106.

¹⁷² Blunt 1967:133 and Levy 2004. According to the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, composed from 1522 to 1524, the believer is urged to use all five senses to realize the scenes of Passion, the torments of hell or the bliss of heaven. See Ignatius of Loyola, Gleason, Robert and Mottola, Anthony, 1524/1964, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, Doubleday, New York.

¹⁷³ Federico Barocci (ca.1526-1612), originally named Federico Fiori, born in Urbino. Barocci worked with Taddeo and Federico Zuccari.

¹⁷⁴ Blunt 1967:135.

¹⁷⁵ See Bal 1991 and Bal and Bryson 1991.

¹⁷⁶ Chandler 2002:2.

the *code*. In relation to the fresco by Chiari, this means that in order to understand the different signs, we need to know the relevant codes of the 17th century. As Chandler asserts in his discussion of Saussure, the *meaning of a sign is not in its relationship to other signs within the language system but rather in the social context of its use*.¹⁷⁷ This might be transferable to the area of visual art, in that the meanings of visual art are defined within a social context.¹⁷⁸ According to Bal and Bryson, the semiotic perspective may be of particular service to art history in the discussion of *context*.¹⁷⁹

Some *signs* are highly conventional and can be understood without reference to the sender, while other *signs* are less conventional, and will be more dependent upon the sender in the reception process. Different groups hold different codes for viewing the same work. An interesting question is therefore, given the goals and ambitions of the Colonna family discussed in chapter 1, which conventions and conceptual codes for viewing the fresco by Chiari were the readers supposed to possess? Towards which groups were the fresco directed? In this, it is also relevant to note that access to the codes might be unevenly distributed, even within the same group.

The scope for the interpretation and importance of signs are not fixed, but total arbitrariness would destroy the communicative function. Certain rationalities must therefore be admitted to the system of signs.¹⁸⁰ When a message is sent by a sender, and received by a receiver, the question is: Which message does the receiver receive? According to D'Alleva,

*In order to be understandable, this message must refer to the reality that sender and receiver share; this reality is called the context. The message must be transmitted via a medium the receiver can access and it must be set in a code that the receiver understands and can use.*¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Chandler 2002:9.

¹⁷⁸ Saussure defines a *sign* to be composed of both a *signifier* and a *signified*, *Saussure 1916/1983:66*. The *signifier* is usually interpreted as the *form that the sign takes*, Chandler 2002:14, and the *signified* as the *concept to which it refers*, Chandler 2002:14. Even this highly simplified version of these concepts, it makes us aware that the content of these concepts are contextually conditioned. Without challenging directly the rationality of Saussure, Peirce, almost an exact contemporary of Saussure, rejected the equation of *content* and *meaning*, and asserted that *the meaning of a sign is not contained within it, but arises in its interpretation*, Chandler 2002:32. This element of interpretation of the signs in Pierce's model gave way to a more dynamic process of interpretation.

¹⁷⁹ Bal and Bryson 1991:177.

¹⁸⁰ See Saussure 1916/1983:73, where he discusses rationalities in the system of language.

¹⁸¹ D'Alleva 2005:33. In these, Roman Jakobson emphasizes in his theory that signs are about communication as a culturally specific process, unspecified reference in D'Alleva 2005:33.

This implies that we could suppose that the Colonna family in the year 1700 and the potential receivers of the message in the fresco shared certain codes and took part in the same *reality*. One obvious association is related to *social class*.¹⁸²

3.4.2. Communication in visual art through emotions and style

How do the viewers experience works of art? This is an essential question when discussing communication in visual art. In religious as well as mundane art through the Renaissance and the baroque, *signs* could represent both physical things and abstract ideas. Signs in art are nevertheless not emotionally neutral. This gives a painting what Poussin called *modus*.¹⁸³ The term alludes to the sentiment in the piece of art, which in turn imparts a certain character.¹⁸⁴ Given an understanding of *signs* in art as consciously implying *emotions* and constructing *modus*, it means that the intentions of the piece of visual art are realized in the process of *reading* the representation. According to Barasch, Poussin used the term *reading* in relation to *reading a picture*¹⁸⁵ which implies that *the same rules that the artist employs in creating his picture the spectator will assume in looking at it and understanding what he sees*.¹⁸⁶ In letting each figure *express only one emotion*, mostly by means of gestures and movements and, *to a lesser degree, by facial expressions*, the picture is made legible, according to Barasch.¹⁸⁷

This implies the avoidance of too many details in the pictures. This is also the credo of the classicist approach to art, separating it from the baroque, which was much more focused on details. Poussin concerned himself with *reason*,¹⁸⁸ which manifests itself mainly through clear and unequivocal presentations.¹⁸⁹

This discussion relates to the term *style*, which could be understood as an expression of an artist's unique identity, as a sign of individuality, but also as an expression of something more objective.¹⁹⁰ In the first case we could, for instance, talk about the personal style of Chiari. Comprehended in this way, style could be a more or less unconscious trace, reflecting the artist's psyche, his or her training, preferences, taste, etc, or some sort of combination.

¹⁸² Chandler stress that the legacy of Saussure's concept of arbitrariness of signs, is to see the relationship between the signifier and the signified as *conventional*, that is as *dependent on social and cultural conventions which have to be learned*, Chandler 2002:28.

¹⁸³ Blunt 1967:226. According to Blunt, Poussin defines different *modes* with illustrations from music.

¹⁸⁴ Sveen 1995:13.

¹⁸⁵ Barasch 1995:328.

¹⁸⁶ Barasch 1995:328.

¹⁸⁷ Barasch 1995:328.

¹⁸⁸ Barasch 1995:327.

¹⁸⁹ This is also what Poussin called *simplicity*, Barasch 1995:327.

¹⁹⁰ Williams 1997:17.

In the case of *style* understood as something more objective, *style* becomes instead a quality achieved by adherence to rules and formulae, as for instance the classical *style*. This adherence to given formulas could be more or less faithful, depending on, for instance, the artist's skills, preferences or will. Interpreted in this way, *style* also becomes something that must be worked for in terms of following established formulas or imitating certain models.¹⁹¹ In this respect the artist retains some control in choosing how to adapt to stylistic formulae which cause variations depending on the circumstances. In this case *style* would be susceptible to evaluation and graduation. According to Williams, what the various senses of the term *style* have in common is the *designation of a formal consistency, and not so much consistency itself as the appearance of consistency*.¹⁹² *Style* in the Renaissance sense, as Williams sees it, can be defined as *the legibility of unifying intention in an object*.¹⁹³

As I shall discuss further in section 4.1 the fresco by Chiari is to be classified as classical, influenced as he was by his teacher Carlo Maratta and the theorist Gian Bellori, both classicists. To classify a piece of visual art as belonging to a certain *style* has implications for the identity of the painter as well as the rhetoric in the aesthetic *expression*. In introducing the concepts of *invention* (inventio), *disposition* (dispositio) and *elocution* (elocutio), Williams illustrates how *style* also becomes a question of rhetoric.¹⁹⁴ Of these, style was usually more strongly related to elocution, the ability of being *eloquent*, than the other two.

3.5. The three topics of the analysis

To illuminate the intention behind the fresco, from the Colonna's point of view, I rely on the different approaches discussed in this chapter. First I will discuss aspects of the iconography from a textual point of view. Then I read the message in the fresco from a contextual perspective in chapter 5. Lastly I will focus on reception and visual communication as strategies in the pursuit of social and political ends through the fresco. The ambition of the analysis is not to give a complete interpretation of the fresco, but to discuss to what extent it is possible to understand selected symbols and scenes in the fresco as chosen for social and

¹⁹¹ Williams 1997:74.

¹⁹² Williams 1997:74.

¹⁹³ Williams 1997:74.

¹⁹⁴ Williams 1997:73-4. According to Williams, the principle of *decorum* is as important to Renaissance art theory as that of *style*. I will not consider this concept in this analysis, although its range of meaning according to Williams is just as broad as that of style, Williams 1997:85. First it governs the relation of an image to its setting or function, next it applies also to the relation between things in a picture and thirdly it applies to the relation between the parts of a picture, Williams 1997:85.

political purposes, i.e. as means to fulfil the goals and ambitions of the Colonna family. To illuminate this, I will base my study on a limited selection of textual sources, contextual relations and strategies for visual communication.

4. An iconographic interpretation of the fresco - textual comments

In the second chapter I described and interpreted the iconography of the fresco. It turned out difficult to find any written document which identifies the programme of the fresco. Strunck, who has done the most extensive work on the embellishment programme in the Palazzo Colonna so far, did not find any documents indicating the programmes of the frescoes in Galleria Colonna.¹⁹⁵ This includes the fresco by Chiari. In this chapter, I will discuss a selection of possible textual sources which could increase our understanding of the fresco. I will limit the discussion to the representation of Marc Antonio.

4.1. The development of the program and its iconography

The development of the iconographical programme for important frescoes and fresco cycles during the high and late baroque was usually a result of some sort of cooperation between the patron, the painter and different professionals. As Haskell writes, the artist was usually provided with the subject of the picture he was asked to paint.¹⁹⁶ It is not easy to say whether the patron actually supervised the treatment. The more important the fresco was supposed to be, the more stringent control might have been exerted. Since this fresco was situated in the *throne room* of the gallery, it might be that Filippo II Colonna, the patron, got into some sort of details. The outline of the subject could for instance be defined by the patron in a way that only left for Chiari to add those elements he found necessary for its representation. According to Haskell, the patrons rarely got into details in their contracts with the artists during the baroque.¹⁹⁷ As a painter about to establish himself among the Roman nobility,¹⁹⁸ Chiari might have been given some freedom through the contract, although less

¹⁹⁵ Strunck 2007:227.

¹⁹⁶ Haskell 1980:8.

¹⁹⁷ Haskell 1980:8-9.

¹⁹⁸ At the time of the commission from the House of Colonna, Chiari had already embellished one of the halls in the *Prince Taddeo's wing* of Palazzo Barberini, with the ceiling fresco *Apollo in the Chariot of the Sun Surrounded by the Seasons* from ca 1693, see illustration 12. Later, Cardinal Fabrizio Spada ordered four oils on canvas in the years 1695 to 1699, with themes from Ovid's *Metamorphose*, now is in the gallery Spada collection. Chiari had also been given the commission to paint *The assumption of the Virgin* in the roof of the little Montioni Chapel in Santa Maria in Montesanto, Piazza del Poppolo, Rome in 1687.

than would have been the case with a better known artist.¹⁹⁹ A possible solution might have been that Colonna asked for a preliminary oil sketch, although no such sketch has been found.

The composition of the fresco has some interesting similarities with the fresco *Apollo in the Chariot of the Sun Surrounded by the Seasons* which Chiari executed in the *Prince Taddeo's wing* of the Palazzo Barberini in 1693.²⁰⁰ Also in this fresco, architectural elements are used to organize the different scenes, at the same time as foreshortening walls leads illusionistically towards an open heaven where the main person, in this case *Apollo* in his chariot, are situated. As in the fresco in Palazzo Colonna, the composition contains of mainly two sections, one in the middle composed of allegorical figures, while the other situated along the edge of the fresco, consists of a presentation of trophies and achievements in honour of the prince. Among the trophies, we find several symbols which Chiari repeats in the Colonna fresco, as for instance the military effects and the mentioned crowns of Europe, making connections to European monarchs. The fresco also includes the heraldic symbols of the Barberini family. Three bees in flight are encircled by puttis at the edges of the fresco. Filippo II Colonna was probably familiar with this work when choosing Chiari as a painter and aspects of this composition were clearly used as a starting point when working out the structure of the fresco in Palazzo Colonna.

Most likely, we do not talk about a single comprehensive textual source like the one outlining the fresco cycle by Pietro da Cortona in Palazzo Pamphilj at Piazza Navona, who built on the epos about *Aeneas*. The Chiari fresco is first and foremost a celebration of a family hero. As an apotheosis, it honours Marc Antonio and his family for their achievements, while no specific events are represented. This does not exclude the possibility that the design of the scenes and the philosophy behind the different representations are influenced by and therefore traceable, to different likely literary and philosophic texts.

Pascoli writes in his text about the life of Chiari, that he consulted *Bellori* for assistance when engaged by a prefect.²⁰¹ According to Haskell, Gian Pietro Bellori (ca. 1615-96) was the most important of the Roman critics of art in the second half of the 17th century.²⁰² Haskell describes Bellori as important in that he broke with the tradition of Vasari

¹⁹⁹ According to Haskell, instructions to the artist would depend upon his reputation and temperament, Haskell 1980:11. It might also been, that Filippo II Colonna chose a relative recently established painter for this work because he wanted to participate more in the implementation.

²⁰⁰ The occasion was the marriage between Urbano Barberini and Felice Ventimiglia Pignatelli in 1693. See illustration 12.

²⁰¹ Pascoli 1730:211-12.

²⁰² Haskell 1980:158. Bellori was a active member of the Accademia de S. Luca and studied the antique period. Bellori held lectures and wrote about both the antique, but also about contemporary 17th century art. Haskell 1980:158. As an art historical, he was recon the baroque equivalent of Giorgio Vasari. Bellori held an influential

and based his judgement of the *Ideal* as it was developed and elaborated by Giovanni Battista Aquicci.²⁰³ Aquicci and Bellori were important in the development of the classical style in the 17th and 18th centuries. Both Chiari and his teacher Carlo Maratta (1625-1713) are said to have consulted Bellori for iconographical advice when given difficult commissions.²⁰⁴

This connection between Chiari and the classical theorists in the history of art in the second half of the 17th century is interesting in a political perspective. In general, the classical style is more readable than the more playful one of the high-baroque, where allegories and attributes get more and more difficult to read and identify.²⁰⁵ Figurations and attributes are swirling together. In interpreting and understanding art in a more political sense, this makes the style of the high-baroque less suitable in terms of making clear statements. As a more power-politically oriented family, this might have influenced the Colonna's to choose a more classical form and an artist who was classically trained. In this way, the chosen artistic language might have been more suitable for the agenda of the Colonna family than the style of the high-baroque, chosen by the humanist-oriented Barberini family in *Divine Providence*.

4.2. Marc Antonio, ancient heroes and heroic events

The references to the ancestors of Marc Antonio and then to the Colonna family in general, are obvious in the fresco, in particular through the presence of *Hercules*. The tracing of the family history back to *Hercules*, based on a fictional story, is expressed in contemporary 17th century genealogical texts. The representation might be interpreted in terms of the work of Filadelfo Mugnos, who in 1658 published a fictitious Colonna genealogy

speech to the Accademia about the *Ideal in Art* in 1664, which was published in 1672 as the preface to Bellori's biography of artist; *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*. See Bellori 1672/2005 pp 55-67.

²⁰³ Haskell 1980:159. Giovanni Battista Aquicci (1570-1632) was an art theorist and highly evaluated connoisseur in Rome. By this he influenced the official taste around the papal court. He wrote his *Trattato della pittura* in the years 1607 to 1615. Here he formulated his classical idealist doctrine. Aquicci believed that in seeking the ideal of beauty, the artists must idealize the imperfect sides of the nature. See Haskell 1980 158-9. The *Tratto* by Aquicci was never published as a whole, but a some of it was published by Bellori in 1672, see Bellori 1672/2005:6, note 45. This doctrine influenced Bellori and the development of the 17th century classicism, which in turn also might have influenced Chiari in his work, Haskell 1980:1958-9.

²⁰⁴ Haskell 1980:159. According to Haskell, Carlo Maratta turned to Bellori for advice when given the commission to paint the fresco in Palazzo Altieri, close to Il Gesù in Rome, in 1673. In its classical style, the fresco is interesting in relation to the fresco twenty five years later by Chiari in Palazzo Colonna. In its strict classical style, the Maratti fresco is strikingly in contrast with for instance *Divine Providence* (1632-37) by Pietro da Cortona in Palazzo Barberini. The Maratti fresco contains three of the cardinal virtues while *Public Happiness* who symbolise Don Gasparo Altieri, the adopted nephew of the Pope Clemet X Altieri, holds a *Standard*. Even if Bellori was no longer alive at the time of the implementation of the Chiari fresco, his text might have been to great inspiration for Chiari.

²⁰⁵ Compare for instance the classical *Divine Knowledge* from 1629-32 by Andrea Sacchi with the more high-baroque *Divine Providence*, both Palazzo Barberini.

connecting the House of Colonna to old Roman families and heroes.²⁰⁶ According to this genealogy, Marc Antonio II Colonna is a descendant of Marcus Antonius,²⁰⁷ and, as such, he had a heroic reputation to live up to. The presentation of Marc Antonio as a classical antique hero in the Chiari fresco²⁰⁸ is perhaps inspired by his Roman ancestors. In this, he is also an expression of the old virtues that connected Marcus Antonius to strength and braveness. Interpreted in this way, Chiari's representation of Marc Antonio and his virtues might be a modern visualization of the classical antique deeds and a parallel to the qualities that characterized the *ancestors* of the Colonna family. In this way, the iconography set the Colonna family not only in a physical and spiritual relation to the already historical hero Marc Antonio, but also in relation to the heroes of the classical antique, especially to Marcus Antonius. The relation is made explicit by visualizing Marc Antonio in a classical antique costume.²⁰⁹ This is strengthened by representing Marc Antonio as a young man, which could be a reinforcement of the relation to the young Marcus Antonius²¹⁰ at the height of his strength and courage.

The obvious references to the *Battle of Lepanto* can also be read as a reference to earlier important battles which changed history, as for instance the battle by Augustus by Actium.²¹¹ In this way, the references to the *Battle of Lepanto* might be read as a parallelization to these earlier battles, which in turn could serve as some sort of prefiguration of the *Battle of Lepanto*. This contributes to a further exaltation of Marc Antonio in special and the Colonna family in general. In setting the event into a historical context, as a repetition of earlier battles, a parallelization is made, not unknown in a religious context where events from the Old Testament is looked upon as preceding events in the New Testament. Marc

²⁰⁶ Filadelfo Mugnos (1658) *Historia della augustissima famiglia Colonna*. The *Libro primo*, pp 1-34, *Historia della casa Colonnese* renders an account of the story of the Colonna family.

²⁰⁷ Marcus Antonius, 83 BC-30 BC, was a Roman politician and general. After his friend Gaius Julius Caesar, a military commander, was assassinated, Marcus Antonius formed an official political alliance with Augustus (known as Octavian until 27 BC). They parted up in 33 BC and in the final war of the Roman Republic in 31 BC, Marcus Antonius was defeated by Augustus in the *Battle of Actium* in 31 BC. Mugnos discusses different members of the Colonna family in his *Libro quattro*, Mugnos 1658:200-319. *Dele vite personaggi, piu illustri della famiglia Colonna. Marc Antonio Colonna, secondo principe di Palliano e Duca di Taglia Tazzo* is discussed in Mugnos 1658:279-283.

²⁰⁸ Sebastiano Ricci also presents Marc Antonio as an antique hero in his fresco in the western anteroom of the Galleria Colonna.

²⁰⁹ In this way, and in accordance with Roskill's interpretation, costumes could be related to ideology, Roskill 1989:96 and section 3.2.

²¹⁰ Strunck see the representation of Marc Antonio as a young man as a reference to the principal's younger brother Marc Antonio, who was 20 years old in 1693, Strunck 2007:331.

²¹¹ Vergil (70 BC-19BC) alludes to The *Battle of Actium* (31BC) in his *Aeneid* (29 BC-19 BC). See also Strunck 2007:332. What is more seldom referred to, are that Marcus Antonius actually lost this battle.

Antonio is then set in relation to even more historical heroes as for instance Aeneas and Augustus from Vergil's version of the battle by Actium.²¹²

4.3. A political-philosophical textual interpretation of the representation of Marc Antonio

As we saw in the second chapter, Marc Antonio is represented as ascending, about to take place within a circle of other men represented as heroes, with laurel wreaths and in Roman dresses. This representation of the main person is interesting. It tells us not only how the Colonna family in the year 1700 estimated Marc Antonio, but also about how the House of Colonna estimated their own position, merits and deeds, and perhaps, their political-philosophical orientation. To focus on the last one, how are we to understand the representation of Marc Antonio in a political-philosophical textual perspective?

During the 17th century, autocracy was the ruling principle in most European places. Although the enlightenment as a philosophical movement mainly had its field in England,²¹³ and later, in the middle of the 18th century, in France,²¹⁴ the ideas about the distribution of power among meritorious men from the nobility were not unknown in the Italian states during this period. In Italy, *Republican* thoughts were revived during the late middle age, where a number of small states embraced a republican system of government.²¹⁵ In his book *Il Principe* from 1513, Machiavelli²¹⁶ sets down a treaty on leadership that was practical, but not necessary idealistic. Machiavelli goes far in recommending a prince, but with a council of advisors.²¹⁷

The idea of a circle of meritorious men is not new with Machiavelli in the early 16th century. Set in a *republic* textual tradition, this idea is traceable to the Roman Empire and the Roman republic, with Cicero's work *De re publica*. Here he gives a description of the *Ideal state*²¹⁸ as a state ruled by a council of meritorious men.²¹⁹ The people are meant to take part

²¹² See Strunck 2007:332.

²¹³ Most important was perhaps John Locke 1632-1704.

²¹⁴ Central in France was Montesquieu 1689-1755, Voltaire 1694-1778 and Rousseau 1712-78.

²¹⁵ Siena is an example.

²¹⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli 1469-1527, lived and worked in Florence.

²¹⁷ Machiavelli *Il principe* / *The Prince* 1513/2003:28.

²¹⁸ *De re publica* was written in the 1st century BC, partly influenced by Plato and his text *The State*.

²¹⁹ Cicero 1 st. century BC/1990:30. A state ruled by selected citizens in a *Re publica* is called an *Aristocracy*, Cicero 1 st. century BC/1990.

in the consultation of the government of the state, through the selection of men. A leader of this *senate* would nevertheless be in charge, according to Cicero.²²⁰

If we suppose that Filippo II Colonna was familiar with these texts, one interesting question is to what degree it influenced the iconography of the fresco, and next, what sort of political representation might be intended through the portrayal of Marc Antonio? Is Marc Antonio represented as being among his equals, in a more *Ciceronian* sense, or is he depicted in a more superior way, like a Machiavellian Prince, with a council of advisors?

One argument for interpreting the representation in a *Ciceronian* sense is the fact that the circle of men is represented as Roman heroes, almost like a Roman senate. This might indicate that the circle of men is to be interpreted as the equals of Marc Antonio. On the other hand, the chair where Marc Antonio will find his place is separated from the other men. In case this might have a political-philosophical meaning, in that Marc Antonio is supposed to hold an elevated position in relation to these men, we could interpret Marc Antonio's position in a more Machiavellian way as a leader, with a council of advisors.²²¹ This might be intended as an allusion to the House of Colonna in general, in suggesting that they qualify as leaders, but in a democratic, *republican* way, bringing in a council of advisors.

In this way, the representation of Marc Antonio placed in a circle of meritorious men, like a council or senate, might signalize a democratic disposition attached to Marc Antonio in particular and the House of Colonna in general. Marc Antonio is represented as taking part in a council of equal meritorious men. This is fully in tone with the contemporary rising ideas north and west in Europe, about a *republican* or *aristocratic* rule. This could also be interpreted as a comment to the papal elective monarchy in Rome, although this is difficult to document based on this representation alone.

Another possible interpretation of the iconographic presentation of Marc Antonio in relation to the circle of men is derived from the contemporary tradition of elevating *great men* whether they are painters, sculptors, architects or others. Pascoli and Vasari are both representatives for such a tradition, with their *Vita* of great artists.²²² To be included in such a presentation increased the appreciation of the men, both by being elected for such a *Vita* and subsequently by those elected adding prestige to each other. This tradition might be seen as given visual form in the fresco, by letting Marc Antonio be part of a circle of other

²²⁰ Cicero 1 st. century BC/1990:30-31.

²²¹ Machiavelli "Il principe / The Prince 1513/2003:28.

²²² Pascoli, Leone (1730) *Vite de Pittori, Scultori ed Architetti moderni* and Vasari, Giorgio (1550/2006) *The Lives of the most excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. Also Bellori, Giovan Pietro (1672/2005) *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects* is part of this tradition.

meritorious men. If we interpret the middle scene in relation to the contemporary tradition of elevating great men, *History* on the opposite side, who writes the name of Marc Antonio on the front page of a book, could be seen as implementing this exaltation.

5. A contextual interpretation of the Chiari fresco

How is the fresco to be understood in a contemporary social and political context? This is the theme of this chapter, where I will focus on some selected aspects of the situations in which the fresco was planned, implemented and intended to function. In this, I will aim at apprehending some of those underlying principles which characterize the basic attitude of the late 17th century nobility in Rome. In this context, I will also discuss the fresco in relation to other Roman frescoes. This is both to set the symbols and scenes of the fresco in an artistic context, but also to illustrate in what way other Roman families visualized their ambitions.

Three topics will be given special attention. Firstly, in what way is the fresco influenced by the contemporary social and political situation in Rome at the turn of the 17th century? What was at stake for the Colonna family at this time and in what way is it likely that these circumstances paved the way for the development of the fresco? Secondly, I will discuss the design of the fresco in relation to the function of the room. Thirdly, I will read the fresco in a pictorial context, and discuss it in relation to the tradition of other Roman frescoes cycles during the 16th and 17th centuries. In this discussion I will also relate the fresco to the remaining frescoes in the Galleria Colonna.

5.1. *The contemporary social and political context at the turn of the 17th century*

5.1.1. **Signalizing strength and status**

During the baroque, and especially during the era of *nepotism*²²³ at the end of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century, Roman society was characterized by a high degree of social mobility, partly related to the papal elective monarchy. New families strove to establish themselves socially and politically in Rome, and a strong competition for power and influence developed. Central in understanding this effort were the strong social dynamics in Rome at this time, described by Strunck as *zölibatären Oligarchie*.²²⁴ Men from different families²²⁵ raised their status and became cardinals, a position of great significance. From these positions, the way to becoming a pope was considerably shortened. At the same time,

²²³ See note 227.

²²⁴ Strunck 2007:18.

²²⁵ Many of them were from other parts of today's Italy than Rome.

the nephews of the popes were often appointed to key positions in the clerical hierarchy. Regularly, and as Reinhard points out, often within rather short intervals *not only rulers changed, but their dynasties as well*.²²⁶ This was perhaps the most important dynamic force in the Roman society during the 17th century,²²⁷ until the accession of Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi (1676-1689).²²⁸

A high turnover rate in terms of social and political positions was reflected in the duration of the papacy. As formulated by Oy-Marra;

*Im Gegensatz zu anderen europäischen Höfen konnte sich in Rom aufgrund der Wahlmonarchie der Päpste keine Familie auf lange Zeit an der Macht etablieren.*²²⁹

Continual change of popes and papal dynasties made the social structures and the political processes in Rome rather unstable.²³⁰

As new families steadily sought and gained power, they needed to legitimize their position in relation to the existing Roman nobility,²³¹ and took advantage of every method available to communicate and promote their social position.²³² Both the *rising families*²³³ and

²²⁶ Reinhard 1991:329. This meant that the complete entourage and affinity of the old ruler were replaced by the new pope.

²²⁷ The popes' prejudice for giving their own relatives, most often their nephews, important position within the civil or ecclesial society in Rome, was called *nepotism*, after the Italian word for nephew, *nepote*, see Scott 1991. The elected pope and his family were allowed during most of the 17th century, within certain limits to take advantage of their position, Reinhard 1991:329. Reinhard asserts that papal nepotism were an essential mechanism of social mobility in Rome during the 17th century, Reinhard 1991:331.

²²⁸ The popes Innocent XI (1676-89) and Innocent XII (1691-1700) were the first popes of the 17th century to handle against this tradition. The official papal system of nepotism was abolished in 1692.

²²⁹ *In contrast to other European courts could no family establish themselves in power for a long time because of the papal election monarchy*, Oy-Marra 2005:9.

²³⁰ Reinhard 1991:330.

²³¹ Oy-Marra 2005:9.

²³² The most important patrons of art at the time were perhaps not the popes themselves but their families. That means in most cases, their nephews, see for instance Karsten 2003, Oy-Marra 2005 and Scott 1991. Nevertheless, the pope and his family could be closely related during the papacy. The pope was the monarch, while his family was his governing dynasty.

²³³ The concept *rising family* or *upcoming family* is somewhat vague in the literature, but is used here to describe Roman noble families not belonging to the old nobility of Rome, as the Colonna family and the Orsini, see Reinhard 1991:332-33. The *Pamphilj* family was for instance originally from Gubbio in Umbria, entering a higher social position with Antonio Pamphilj (d. 1485) who was appointed Procurator Fiscal for The Papal States by his friend pope Sixtus IV della Rovere. His grandsons' grandson Giambattista Pamphilj (1574 -1655) was elected pope in 1644, Pope Innocent X Pamphilj. The first Cardinal of the Pamphilj family, Girolamo Pamphilj, was created in 1604, Majanlahti 2005:277. The *Barberini* family came to Rome with Antonio Barberini (1494 – 1559) from the Florentine territory of Val d'Elsa. His nephew, Francesco di Carlo Barberini (1528-1600) became papal treasurer and attained the title monsignor, who is directly subordinated the title of Cardinal, Maffeo Barberini, later Pope Urban VIII Barberini (1623-1644) was the nephew of Francesco di Carlo Barberini, Majanlahti 2005:216-17. The *Borghese* family was from Siena. Marcantonio I Borghese (1504-74) became the Siennese ambassador to the pope and lived most of his life in Rome. His two sons entered the church and while one of them died early, the other, Camillo Borghese (1552 – 1621) with great diplomatic skills became elected for pope in 1605, Pope Paul V Borghese, Majanlahti 2005:175. These illustrate how short history the Barberini

the ones already settled within the Roman nobility felt a strong need to establish and conduct themselves in a socially representative way and hereto belonged palaces and art.

The use of artistic and architectural patronage to express identity dispersed widely in Rome and elsewhere in the Italian region. Art and architecture were used as a way of articulating *elevations of rank*.²³⁴ Following Leone; *the family palace in particular became synonymous with the status of the inhabitants*.²³⁵ In this way, the palace, its art and architecture contributed to *forming the family's collective identity* as Leone puts it.²³⁶ This is in accordance with a humanist tradition based on the *virtue of magnificence* which held that *outward appearance represents inner spirit*.²³⁷ In this way, both architecture and internal embellishment in the form of large fresco cycles were principal means of *establishing and communicating social status*.²³⁸ Additionally, they embodied and legitimized the owner's ambitions in terms of positions and power. The palaces also served another important function for the noble families, by providing a stage for the enactment of important social rituals. In her thesis on 17th century Roman palaces, Waddy asserts that the internal design of the apartments within the palaces were intimately bound to the etiquette of diplomacy²³⁹ and reflected the requirements of court ritual as codified in contemporary conduct books. These books about etiquette within the nobility extensively influenced the conduct of life during the 16th and 17th centuries.²⁴⁰ Every kind of social and public interaction was governed by a set of strict rules. This conditioned the design of the rooms of the many noble palaces in Rome in the baroque especially the ones used for representation, but also in some degree the private rooms.²⁴¹

In this way, the high degree of social mobility in the Roman society and the link between art and identity becomes perhaps the most important dynamic force in the

and the Borghese had in Rome before they got elected a member as pope. The Pamphilj had a longer history in relation to the church. See also Reinhard 1991:333-34.

²³⁴ Leone: 2008:23. With reference to *Mirka Benes, The Villa Pamphilj 1630-1670): Family, Gardens, and Land in Papal Rome*. Ph.D.diss. 2 vols. Yale University, 1989:31. Leone asserts that the arrival of pope Innocent X Pamphilj (1644-55) *at the top of the Roman hierarchy represented the culmination of a long—standing family strategy of social advancement. His renovation of Piazza Navona can be interpreted as the visual proclamation of its success*, Leone 2008:23.

²³⁵ Leone: 2008:23.

²³⁶ Leone: 2008:27.

²³⁷ Leone: 2008:28.

²³⁸ Leone: 2008:28. Leone shows in her study how the Pamphilj family during the pontificate of pope Innocent X Pamphilj remodelled their palace at Piazza Navona to accomplish their new social status and in what way they employed art and architecture to build a new image.

²³⁹ Waddy 1990:3. In her thesis Waddy documents this assertion with several examples from Roman baroque palaces.

²⁴⁰ One of the most well known was written by Baldassare Castiglione, *Libro del cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*) and was first published in 1528.

²⁴¹ See part 5.2.

development of Roman art during the 16th and 17th centuries. This is important as a frame for understanding the development of the large fresco programme in Galleria Colonna in general and the Chiari fresco in particular. But what is the mechanism behind this relation between status and power on the one side and art and architecture on the other? One argument is that the extensive embellishment programmes for instance in Palazzo Colonna, indicated financial solidity and thereby the ability to exert political influence and power. Another argument is the connection between *taste* and *social distinction*,²⁴² where taste could be an instrument for identifying the elite. The patron of art is then represented through his or her *elevated taste*.

Art patronage in itself was, however, not unique for Roman popes and their families or other part of the Roman nobility. As Karsten puts it:

*Kunstpatronage gehörte zur sozialen Rolle des Mächtigen in der frühen Neuzeit, nicht nur in Rom, sondern überall in Europa – in Rome jedoch in besonderem Masse. Nicht etwa, weil hier durch göttlichen Ratschluss oder puren Zufall eine einmalige Zahl von idealistischen, kunstbegeisterten Schöngeistern zusammentraf, sondern aufgrund spezifischer sozialer Konstellationen.*²⁴³

5.1.2. The Turkish threat

In this highly competitive situation, not only the Chiari fresco, but the whole *Galleria Colonna* is based upon themes from the battle against the Turks in Lepanto 1571. To understand this choice of theme, we have to focus on the *Turkish threat* against Western Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. One of the main political and religious questions during most of the 17th century was the strife for influence in the east of Europe, where the question of the Turkish influence had persisted for centuries.²⁴⁴ The expansion of the Ottoman Empire represented a threat for the west along several dimensions. While the pope saw the expansion as a threat against Christianity, as the Turkish were Muslims, the Turkish intrusion

²⁴² This is discussed by Leone 2008:37.

²⁴³ *Art patronage did belong to the social role of the powerful in the early modern time [this is approximately the period in between the Middle Ages and the French revolution, in Rome from about 1450 until 1800, authors remark], not only in Rome, but everywhere in Europe – in Rome however in an especially scale. Perhaps not, because it here occurred through "pious deliberation [a deliberation among Gods] or [because of] a clear coincidence of a unique number of idealistic, art enthusiastic artlovers, but because of a specific social constellation"* Karsten 2003:5. The author's translation from the German, NB, the concept "göttlichen Ratschluss" is a more poetic expression meaning *a deliberation among Gods*.

²⁴⁴ Shaw 1976 gives an extensive understanding in the rise and decline of the Ottoman Empire 1280-1808.

represented a huge political threat for the German-Roman emperor, as the Turks were invading parts of Hungary.²⁴⁵

The turning point of the Turkish expansion was the Christian victory against the Turks in Vienna in 1683. These lead to the peace of Karlowitz in 1699.²⁴⁶ In this peace treaty, most of Hungary was given back to the Habsburg Emperor.²⁴⁷ This suggests how important this peace treaty was both for the German-Roman emperor and for the Church of Rome, as the Turks were regarded to be a huge threat against the Catholic Church. According to von Pastor, the peace of Karlowitz was received with enthusiasm in Rome, ...*jetzt kannte der Jubel keinen Grenzen mehr[...] Bei Einbruch der Nacht war ganz Rom beluchtet; das Volk rief begeistert:....*²⁴⁸

At the turn of the 17th century it must have been important for the Colonna family to remind both the Church, the emperor, the other monarchs of Europe and not the least the Roman nobility that they had played a role in this victory, through the achievements of Marc Antonio at Lepanto. The *Battle of Lepanto* in 1571 is said to have been the last great crusade and *the climax of the struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean era*.²⁴⁹ The *Battle of Lepanto* itself was the result of a Turkish invasion of Cyprus, which at the time was governed by the Venetians.²⁵⁰ The Venetians needed help to defend their land, and an alliance between Spain and the pope was reached.²⁵¹ The Christians felt that the Turkish galleys were threatening Venice, Naples and Rome. In this way, the *Battle at Lepanto* was an important attempt to stop further invasion.

The King of Spain appointed his half brother Don Juan of Austria (1547-78) as Captain General of the Fleet of the Holy League in 1571 and the overall leader of the Fleet.²⁵² For the Papal Fleet,²⁵³ the pope nominated Marc Antonio II Colonna, Duke of Paliano and a Roman nobleman, to Captain General.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁵ In 1683 when the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith, it included both Buda and Pest in Hungary.

²⁴⁶ Tóth 2005:284.

²⁴⁷ Shaw and Shaw 1977:xxiv.

²⁴⁸ [...] *now the cheering did not know any border any more [...] At nightfall the whole of Rome were illuminated, the wolf cried enthusiastic:..*, von Pastor 1960:796.

²⁴⁹ Konstam 2003:7.

²⁵⁰ Konstam 2003:7.

²⁵¹ King Philip II of Spain, who reigned from 1556 to 1600, was encouraged to join forces with the Venetians and the papacy to form the Holy League by Pope Pius V, who reigned from 1566 to 1572, Konstam 2003:13.

²⁵² Konstam ascribe the diplomatic skills of Juan de Austria the success in holding the fragile Christian alliance together during the campaign of Lepanto, Konstam 2003:13.

²⁵³ The Holy League contained different fleets and galleys, see Konstam 2003. The Papal Fleet formed a part of this. Each of the fleets and galleys had their own leaders.

²⁵⁴ Capponi 2006:131.

Returning to Rome after a victorious battle for the Holy League, the whole of Rome took part in the cheering, according to von Pastor.²⁵⁵ Pope Pius V Ghislieri (1566-1572) and the Roman Conservatorium wanted to give Marc Antonio a reception like a classical antique triumphator.²⁵⁶ This was soon met by criticism. Strunck refers to Christians who did not want a triumph in pagan style.²⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that at this occasion, the Spanish refused to celebrate Colonna. From their point of view, Juan de Austria was the real winner at Lepanto. According to Strunck, Marc Antonio himself also preferred a more moderate reception, not risking his relations to the Spanish court.²⁵⁸ The result was a more modest reception of Marc Antonio.²⁵⁹

Even if Marc Antonio's ceremonial entry to Rome at the 4. December 1571 was more moderate than a pagan Roman antique triumphal processions, his entry did nevertheless cause opposition.²⁶⁰ Some Roman noblemen boycotted the whole event,²⁶¹ demonstrating that Marc Antonio's role was somewhat controversial. It might have provoked jealousy among the Roman nobility that the Colonna family got into this elevated position. It is natural to assume that the intense struggle among the noble families for status and prestige reinforced this jealousy.

Notwithstanding this controversy, it is my thesis that because of the eagerness of the House of Colonna to stay in power in the Roman society, it was convenient to communicate that they had their part in the strove against the Turks. This was especially important in times of changing fortunes at the turn of the 17th century.

5.1.3. The changing fortunes of the Colonna family in the 17th century

At the same time as new families established themselves within the powerful ecclesiastical system of Rome, the influence of the old Roman nobility tended to weaken. In

²⁵⁵ Von Pastor 1958:592.

²⁵⁶ Strunck 2007:252.

²⁵⁷ Strunck 2007:252.

²⁵⁸ Strunck 2007:252.

²⁵⁹ Von Pastor describes how he entered the town, through via Appia, among thousands of people, riding on a white horse, unarmed, only with a black mantel and hat and a golden shirt, wearing *The Order of the Golden Vlies*, Von Pastor 1958:597.

²⁶⁰ Strunck 2007:253 with references to Campana 1605-1608, *La Vita del Catholico et Invittissimo Don Filippo Seconda d' Austria Re delle Spagne, & c. Con le Guerre de suoi Tempi. Descritte da Cesare Campana Gentil'huomo Aquilano* 4. Bde., Vicenza 1605-1608, III,123 v. Here it says that: *[Colonna] fù altresì dal Papa, e dal Senato Romano, accolto con tanta pompa, che potè rinovellar la memoria de gli altri più antichi trionfi, & esser il suo annoverato fra quelli, quantunque gli se ne generasse grande invidia, & non piccioli travagli*. Which says approximately: (Marc Antonio Colonna) was received by the Pope and the Roman Senate with a lot of pomp, in the same way as the antique triumph & his triumph can be remembered as this (the antiques) and his triumph brought a lot of envy among the people & and some problems. Translation from the Italian by the author from the authentic text, as it is referred by Struck 2007:253.

²⁶¹ Strunck 2007:253.

1641 Teodoro Amayden put the House of Colonna at the top of the Roman society, together with the Orsini, Conti and Savelli.²⁶² But as Gampp points out, *Deren Ansehen beruhte in 17.Jh. immer weniger auf ihren Reichtum,[...], als vielmehr auf Alter und der Art ihres Adels.*²⁶³ In this situation, the Colonna family defended itself against the so-called *baron d'oggi*²⁶⁴ by using its long history as one of the leading houses of Rome.

I shall use certain highlights in their history during the 17th century to describe in what degree and in what way the Colonna family participated in this struggle for social and political status. The main question is whether there was any notable change in the prestige of the Colonna family during the 17th century which might have resulted in the creation of the Chiari fresco.

The Colonna family enjoyed longer prominence than any other patrician family in Rome.²⁶⁵ For more than 700 years, down to the 19th century, the family was central in most important events in Rome. The family was not only rich, but also powerful and respected, although, for longer periods, there were conflicts both with another patrician family, the Orsini, and the Church.

As was the case with most families of the Roman nobility, the ancestors of the Colonna family were connected to classical antique heroes.²⁶⁶ As we shall see, such antique relations were an important aspect of princely representation in Rome during the 17th century. In the case of the Colonna family, the fictitious part of their genealogical tree was related to the family name, the *column*,²⁶⁷ and such classical antique personalities as could possibly be related to this symbol.²⁶⁸ Most important here is *Hercules*²⁶⁹ as well as the virtues of

²⁶² Teodoro Amayden, 1641/1914, *La Storia delle famiglie Romane. Con note e aggiunte di Carlo Augusto Bertini*, 2 Bde. Roma, quoted in Gampp 2001:136.

²⁶³ *Their esteem in the 17th century depended less on their wealth,[...], and more on their age and type of nobility.* Gampp 2001:136.

²⁶⁴ *Oggi* is Italian for *today*, and directly translated from Italian, the term means *the baron of the today*. The term is used polemically by Elena Tamburini 1997 *Due teatri per il principe. Studi sulla committenza teatrale di Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna (1659-1689). Con un'ipotesi di ricostruzione del teatro "piccolo" elaborata in collaborazione con Sergio Rotondi*, Roma:127, about the rising families in the Roman nobility, referred in Strunck 2007:18.

²⁶⁵ Rehberg 1992:171 and Gampp 2001:136.

²⁶⁶ See the fictive genealogy by Filadelfo Mugnos, 1658, *Historia della augustissima famiglia Colonna*, mention in section 4.2, where the family fictively is related to the ancient hero *Hercules*.

²⁶⁷ The family name *Colonna* is Italian for *column*.

²⁶⁸ Rehberg 1992:171.

²⁶⁹ See Walter 1997, who discusses the columns of *Hercules* as a symbol. In the case of Colonna, the inclusion of *Hercules* in the fresco might allude to him as one of the ancestors of the Colonna family.

*Fortitudo*²⁷⁰ because of the connection between the column and the virtues of strength and courage.²⁷¹

The Colonna family divided into several branches already in the early 13th century. The Palestrina line was the most prosperous. One climax in the family history was the election of Oddone Colonna for pope in 1417.²⁷² This initiated a period of growth for the family, with an increase in estates and, to some degree, the acquisition of important titles within the Church.²⁷³ A prominent member of the family, Fabrizio Colonna (ca.1450-1520), acquired in 1515 the highly appreciated title *Gran Contestabile del Regno di Napoli* which stayed in the family for centuries.²⁷⁴ The *Gran Contestabile* of the King of Naples was the king's ambassador to Rome. This was an important and powerful position connecting the Colonna family to the Spanish king, as Naples was under the Spanish throne. In this way, the Colonna family built their social and political status on relations to the Spanish king. According to Gampp, it was a hallmark of the *real nobility* of Rome that they *vor allem vom Kaiser oder dem spanischen König verliehen*,²⁷⁵ which gave them a possibility to build relations to European monarchs.²⁷⁶ This separated the old nobility from the new one, where the latter depended upon a relationship to the pope for their status.

A second climax in terms of family honour took place in 1570, when Marc Antonio II Colonna was appointed commander in chief of the Holy League by Pope Pius V Ghislieri, which, as we saw, eventually led to the victory over the Turks in the naval *Battle of Lepanto* in 1571. Although this position brought great honour to the family, the tasks of war and the splendour of Marc Antonio and his son, cardinal Ascanio, reduced the family's fortune considerably for years, until a descendant of Marc Antonio II managed at the turn of the 16th century, to restore the finances.

Meanwhile, other branches of the Colonna family were not managing their finances as capably, and lost their estates to rising papal families. The title *Gran Contestabile* nevertheless stayed in the *Paliano* branch of the family and they managed to keep their main estate situated in Rome. But even Filippo I Colonna di Paliano (1578-1639) turned to Spain

²⁷⁰ Ripa uses in his *Iconologia* from 1611 the *column* as an attribute of *Fortezza* (*Fortitudo* in Latin), Ripa 1611/1976:179. In this way, a connection is built between *Fortitudo* and the Colonna family through the symbol of the *column*. See also note 54 above.

²⁷¹ I will not discuss theories about how it came about that the family took the name *Colonna*. Several theories exist, from the more simple ones, that it relates to that the family settled close to the Trajan column in Rome, to more advanced theories. For this see Rehberg 1999:303.

²⁷² Pope Martin V 1417-31, born in 1368 in Genazzano in Latium.

²⁷³ Rehberg 1992.

²⁷⁴ Paschini 1955:49 and Calabrese 1991:33-34.

²⁷⁵ ...*first and foremost depended on the emperor or the Spanish king*, Gampp 2001:136.

²⁷⁶ Gampp 2001:136.

for help when facing a possible loss of estates.²⁷⁷ The fact that the House of Colonna in this difficult financial situation turned to Spain for help is interpreted as a sign that they neither had support among the people of Rome nor among the nobility.²⁷⁸ By 1630, only Paliano remained of the three main estates under the Colonna family. The loss of important estates reduced the status of the House of Colonna considerably.

One important way the family could restore their status and prestige was through marriage. Therefore, the daughter of Filippo I Colonna di Paliano, Anna, married Taddeo Barberini, a member of a rich and rising family of Rome, in 1626. Shortly after this occasion, the large Colonna estate, the Palestrina, was sold to the Barberini.²⁷⁹

Even in times when the financial solidity of the old Roman nobility was weak, the families kept up the pomp and ceremonies. As Karsten puts it in his thesis

*Je schwächer die tatsächliche Position, desto lauter wird die Propaganda ausfallen, so können man eine Grundregel politischer Selbstdarstellung zusammenfassen, die Schlüssel für das Verständnis der unvergleichlich intensiven Kunstproduktion im Rom des 17. Jahrhunderts liefert.*²⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the *di Paliano* branch of the Colonna family still had a high position in terms of rights and ranking in the mid 17th century.²⁸¹

In public ceremonies, however, the status of the Colonna family was less apparent than their history called for. In public ceremonies in Rome at this time, the ranking of the different families was of tremendous importance. This was the stage for public displays of status.²⁸²

At the turn of the century, the Colonna family encountered more difficulties. Their cardinal, Girolamo Colonna died in 1666,²⁸³ and the Colonna family lost their position in the College of Cardinals. Girolamo Colonna was on close terms with Pope Urban VIII Barberini.

²⁷⁷ Gampp 1996:258

²⁷⁸ Strunck 2007:23 with reference to Daniel Büchel 1996 *Ebenbürtig oder Parvenus? Die Heiratspolitik der römischen Papstnepotenfamilien des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Lizentiatsarbeit Freiburg:46

²⁷⁹ The third important estate for the Colonna family was Zagarolo, who was sold to the *Kardinalnepoten* Ludovico Ludovici in 1622, Jaitner 1997:151-52.

²⁸⁰ *The weaker the actual position, the stronger will the propaganda turn out, in this way we could summarize a fundamental rule of political self representation, the key to understanding the incomparable intensive art production in Rome in the 17th century.* Karsten 2003:136..

²⁸¹ As a symbol of this, they had for instance rights as an emperor at their estates. Strunck name it as *quasi sovrano*, which is Italian for *half sovereign*, over their *Staat*, or *estates*, Strunck 2007:26.

²⁸² Sassoli 1997:42.

²⁸³ Rehberg 1992:187. The family is without a cardinal until Carlo Colonna, the brother of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, became cardinal in 1706, Paschini 1955:69.

The following pope, Innocent X Pamphilj, did not favour the Colonna family. This impaired their position compared to families close to the Pamphilj family.²⁸⁴ The House of Colonna was offered the important position of archbishop of Bologna, but the family had to give up the perhaps more influential position as archpriest of the Lateran in Rome.

From 1650 on, the Colonna family spent a lot of resources on visual representation. This indicates that they must have felt a need for positive publicity. Their remaining privileges came from the connection with Spain, but their position as one of the leading among the Roman nobility was threatened. In 1655 Marc Antonio V Colonna²⁸⁵ applied to the Pope to be appointed messenger of the German-Roman emperor, but Pope Alexander VII Chigi (1655-67) refused.²⁸⁶ This indicates both the eagerness of the Colonna family, or more specifically, the *di Paliano* branch of the family, to be on good terms with the emperor and at the same time the unwillingness of Pope Alexander VII Chigi to give them precedence. In 1660 Pope Alexander VII Chigi decided that all Roman nobility should address each other as *Eccellenza*.²⁸⁷ This reduced the prerequisites already held by the Colonna and the Orsini family, the leading two among the old Roman nobility.

Another problem that arose for the House of Colonna through the marriage between Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna (1637-89), the *Gran Contestabile* and head of the *di Paliano* branch of the family, and Maria Mancini (1639-1715).²⁸⁸ She was the niece of the French minister Mazarin,²⁸⁹ but also known as one of the favourites of Louis XIV. This marriage was supposed to strengthen relations with France. However, the death of Mazarin before the marriage changed this. Despite this new situation, they chose to go ahead with the marriage plans, but because of the rumour about Maria and the French king, the marriage was ridiculed in Rome. Lorenzo and Maria also lived a *scandalous life* in Rome,²⁹⁰ which further damaged

²⁸⁴ According to Strunck 2007:40, the Colonna family lost their position as *Assistente al Soglio*, Italian for *Assistant to the (papal) throne*, during the pontificate of Innocent X. This undermined their position in Roman society, Strunck 2007:40. To hold the office of *Assistente al Soglio* entailed among other things standing next to the pope during masses and performing services for the pope, such as receiving the censer. To avoid conflicts between the Colonna and the Orsini, Pope Julius II (1503-13) chose the head of both families to hold this position. A decision conferred by pope Sixtus V (1585-90). After Innocent X, the position once more was conferred on the Colonna by Pope Clemens XI Albani (1700-21).

²⁸⁵ Marc Antonio V Colonna, 1607/1609-1659, was also the holder of the title *Gran Contestabile* and was the father of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna and the grandfather of Filippo II Colonna, who ordered the Chiari fresco.

²⁸⁶ Von Pastor 1960:357. Pastor uses the term *Gesandter*.

²⁸⁷ Strunck 2007:45.

²⁸⁸ Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna and Maria Mancini were married in 1661, Paschini 1955:67.

²⁸⁹ Aasen 2005: 159.

²⁹⁰ According to Paschini, Maria Mancini brought with her her French manners, which surpassed what went for normality in contemporary Rome, Paschini 1955:68. Maria Mancini left Rome alone in 1672 and eventually settled as a nun in Madrid. It was a big scandal in Rome, which damaged the prestige of the family even further. Eventually Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna and Maria Mancini were divorced. Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna later withdrew from publicity, and surrounded himself with personalities at odds with the common way of living in

the prestige of the Colonna family.²⁹¹ At the same time, the House of Colonna was involved in a conflict with the Spanish monarch related to positions in a cavalcade in Rome,²⁹² the *Chinea Cavalcade* in the years of 1670.²⁹³

Despite all these difficulties, the Colonna family retained some sort of dominance at the turn of the 17th century. Strunck mentions a few reasons for this.²⁹⁴ First, both Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi (1676-1689) and Pope Innocent XII Pignatelli (1691-1700) were critical of nepotism. As a result, the Colonna family did not compete with any new families for positions in Roman society. Next, the rivalry with Orsini di Bracciano ended with the financial ruin of Don Flavio Orsini in 1698. This made it possible for the House of Colonna to dominate Roman nobility even in situations where they were more or less out of step with the pope, the nobility of Rome and, not the least, the people. Lastly, Filippo II Colonna²⁹⁵ married Olimpia Pamphili in 1697.²⁹⁶ This marriage was highly important in keeping the Colonna at the top of Roman society. Both money and prestige followed this marriage. Strunck asserts that a decisive policy of marriages might have helped keeping the House of Colonna on top of the Roman society.²⁹⁷

This illustrates the abiding desire of the Colonna family for power and prestige in the second half of the 17th century. As was among for Roman aristocratic families, they secured their attractiveness through alliances with other aristocratic families. In the building of such alliances both financial and symbolic prestige was essential. Additionally, the Colonna family

Rome at the time. According to Aasen, the reason for Maria Mancini's leaving Rome was that her relation to her husband was everything but good. With reference to Maria Mancini's memoirs, Aasen asserts that Colonna was not an easy man, but jealous and tight, wanting to control Maria Mancini. On the other side, Maria Mancini is also described as a rather determined woman. In sum, this marriage with all its conflicts and scandals, might have harmed the standing of the family in the Roman upper classes. See Aasen 2005:162 and the joint edition of the memoirs of Maria Mancini and her sister Hortense Mancini; Mancini, Hortense – Mancini, Maria (2003) *Mémoires d'Hortense et de Marie Mancini*. Éd. Présentée et annotée par Gérard Doscot, Paris.

²⁹¹ Neither Pope Clemens X Altieri, (1670-76), nor Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi, (1676-89), admitted the Colonna family any favourable position because of the loose life of Maria and Lorenzo. It was first Pope Innocent XII Pignatelli (1691-1700) who showed a friendlier attitude towards the Colonna family, Strunck 2007:50.

²⁹² This conflict was related to the position of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna in the *Chinea* celebration. In her study, Strunck emphasize the conflict that had evolved between the Colonna family and Spanish royal house about this position. For this conflict, see Strunck 2007:29, 30, 191 and 241.

²⁹³ The *Chinea* was a tribute to the pope, held every year from 1472 to 1788. The occasion was the King of Naples paying his taxes to the Pope. It was done in the form of a big festival, with a large procession the first day. In this procession there was a fixed order of noble families, ambassadors and others. At the end of the 16th century, the *Chinea* was the largest secular festival in Rome, and was regarded as highly important, first and foremost politically. It was a demonstration of the subordination of the King of Naples to the papal authority, and the other way around, that the King recognised the authority of the Pope. As such, the ceremony was highly important as a public manifestation of these power relations, Sassoli 1997:42.

²⁹⁴ Strunck 2007: 52.

²⁹⁵ Filippo II Colonna di Paliano, 1663-1714, was the firstborn son of Maria Mancini and Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna.

²⁹⁶ The new heir of the Colonna family, Fabrizio Colonna, was born 28. January 1700.

²⁹⁷ Strunck 2007:54.

had contacts with other monarchs in Europe, especially the Spanish king and the German-Roman emperor. This was of great importance for their standing in contemporary Roman society and opened more possibilities for them than was the case for the rising families of Rome, who depended on the pope and the Church for their prestige.

My hypothesis is that this in sum motivated the Colonna family not only to embark on the extensive embellishment in their *Galleria Colonna* in the second half of the 17th century, but in particular to commission the creation of the fresco by Chiari in the *throne room* of the gallery. The family was highly in need of boosting its social status and political influence, and for this, they turned to this extensive embellishment project.

5.2. Galleries in Roman palaces at the turn of the 17th century

5.2.1. The development and use

In what ways did this pursuit of social and political ambitions materialize in the development of Roman palaces in general during the 16th and 17th centuries and the Colonna palace in particular?

The palaces of the old Roman nobility had traditionally a *Sala Grande* for representative use.²⁹⁸ For showing their visitors their dynasties, the *Sala Grande* were often decorated with portraits or images from the family history, and they were an ideal place for commemorating important events in the history of the House and for giving praise to the deeds of the family.

In the late 16th century and during the 17th century, large galleries began to replace the *Sala Grande* in Roman palaces.²⁹⁹ The trend was inspired by the French. The position and the dimensions of the galleries tell us that they were supposed to form the centre of representation in the palaces. This became to a large extent popular among the rising families, their popes and *nepotes*, as for instance in the Palazzo Pamphilj at Piazza Navona. Usually, the old noble families of Rome did not embellish their homes with such galleries. There were several reasons for this. Strunck asserts that it was difficult to integrate a large gallery into the old palaces. It would also be very expensive.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Waddy 1990:4. According to Waddy the *Sala Grande* or *Sala dei palafrenieri* (*The Sale of the "Knights"*) were normally placed beyond the landing of the stairs up to the *piano nobile*. The *Sala* were normally succeeded by perhaps two anterooms and then the audienceroom, Waddy 1990:4. Banquets might be arranged in the *Sala*, Waddy 1990:6.

²⁹⁹ Strunck 2001:208.

³⁰⁰ Strunck 2007:353.

The rising families of Rome expressed their wealth in these galleries, with art collections and excessive embellishments. As distinctly different from the old Roman nobility, who usually had powerful allies, the rising families during the 17th century had less of an old network to rely on, and were thus eager to *buy* one through showing of their capability.

The Colonna family forms an exception from this trend. While; *Die Spitzen der alten römischen Aristokratie taten sich beim Galeriebau nicht sonderlich hervor*, as Strunck formulates it,³⁰¹ the House of Colonna followed the new trend and formed a large gallery within their palace on the slopes of the Quirinale hill in Rome. In this way, they demonstrated that they had money enough not only to build such a gallery, but also to surpass the galleries built by other Roman families. Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, who was in charge of building the gallery, might have felt that he had to exceed the new papal dynasties in splendour and pomp. Strunck asserts that the gallery of the Colonna family aimed at surpassing the fresco system in two galleries built by so-called *nepotes*, in Palazzo Pamphilj on the Corso and Palazzo Pamphilj on Piazza Navona.³⁰²

To represent their family history in a respectable way nevertheless became a challenge for the popes from the *rising families* and their *nepotes*. While the House of Colonna could turn to a real hero of flesh and blood within their own family, the Barberini and the Altieri families for instance solved this by glorifying the virtues of their pope as a way to legitimize their elevated social position.³⁰³ At the same time, the Pamphilj family resorted to an allegorical story from the Aenesis, which were intended to refer to the virtues of Pope Innocent X Pamphilj.³⁰⁴

5.2.2. The function of the room containing the Chiari fresco

The room decorated with the Chiari fresco was initially meant as a *throne room*, containing a bed for receptions, and is separated from the main gallery by a small step upward and one whole column and a half-column on each side of the step.³⁰⁵ The arrangements gave

³⁰¹ *The top of the old Roman nobility did not distinguish themselves especially in building galleries*, Strunck 2001:211.

³⁰² Strunck 2007: 354.

³⁰³ Strunck 2001:205.

³⁰⁴ The Pamphilj family did use the story of Aenesis as their genealogical ancestors. The choice of Aenesis was therefore not totally arbitrary as a theme for their gallery.

³⁰⁵ Strunck ascribe the plan of the main gallery to Bernini, see Strunck 2007. The plan with two columns is nevertheless probably no coincidence. In his article about French and Austrian baroque architecture, Karl Möseneder interprets the pair of columns in the plan of Fischer von Erlach in the *Hofbibliothek* in Vienna with references to the pair of columns in Galleria Colonna. He sees them as a symbol of the two columns of *Hercules* in monumental form, Möseneder 1982:165. The implication of Möseneder's theory is that the embellishment

the room a pronounced dignity. In addition, the stuck has a triumphal embellishment, with weapons and pennants. The four large mirrors in the room are characteristic of royal audience rooms³⁰⁶ and the gallery of ancestors and family portraits on the walls emphasize the nobility of the Colonna family. In her study, Strunck name the *throne room* the *head* of the gallery, and asserts that the fresco by Chiari mirrors this structure. The representation of Marc Antonio as entering a throne in the middle of a group of merited men strengthens the relation between the function of the room a *throne room* and the fresco.³⁰⁷ As the centre for representation, it was important for the Colonna family to show their visitors that they were entitled to a supreme and selected place in the Roman society. In this way there is a close relation between the embellishment of the *throne room* and the adjacent main gallery. Strunck asserts that Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's plan for the main gallery, as the representative centre, was made more intensive by his son Filippo II Colonna, and that *das Deckenfresko über der "Thronenstrade", das er bei Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari in Auftrag gab, thematisert das Thronen.*³⁰⁸

5.3. The fresco by Chiari read in a pictorial context

5.3.1. The fresco and the tradition of large Roman fresco cycles

In what way was the execution of the Chiari fresco influenced by the Roman tradition of large fresco cycles developed in the 16th and 17th centuries both in secular and ecclesiastical settings?

During this period, Rome and its surroundings saw several large fresco programmes familiar both to Chiari and his patrons within the Colonna family. Among the most astonishing ones are the frescoes in the Barberini palace, *Divine Providence* from 1632-37 by Pietro da Cortona and *Divine Knowledge* from 1629-33 by Andrea Sacchi and the *Aeneas cycle* by Pietro da Cortona in Palazzo Pamphilj at Piazza Navona from 1651-54. Also the 16th century fresco cycles in the papal rooms in the Vatican palace, the *Sala di Costantino*, from 1517-24 by Giulio Romano, and *Sala Clementina*, by Giovanni and Cherubino Alberi from 1596-1600, were both logical and accessible models which might have inspired Chiari and the

programme of this *throne room* in Galleria Colonna are related to *Hercules* and his attributes, the same attributes as the House of Colonna. See also Walter 1997, who discusses this double monument as a symbol of *Hercules*.

³⁰⁶ Strunck 2007:343.

³⁰⁷ Strunck 2007:344.

³⁰⁸ *The fresco in the roof over the Throne, that was given Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari as a commission, thematise the throne.* Strunck 2007:348. Strunck asserts nevertheless that the room lost its functions in 1700, Strunck 2007:343.

Colonna family. The same accounts to the frescoes found in the audience chambers in the Farnese palace in Rome and in the Farnese villa at Caprarola³⁰⁹ and the *Sala dei Cento Giorni* in the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome, from 1546 by Vasari. In Rome, the frescoes by Carracci in Palazzo Farnese³¹⁰ is important as a revival of the classical style and in breaking the mannerist tradition seen for instance at Caprarola in the frescoes by the Zuccari brothers and by Vasari in *Sala dei Cento Giorni*.

Beginning with the representation of the virtues, Chiari follows a broad tradition flourishing from the 16th century and onwards through the 17th century, where virtues appropriate to the popes and their families are rather extensively visualized. In for instance *Sala di Costantino* and *Sala Clementina*, the frescoes focuses on papal virtues and illustrates them by historical instances to tell how these virtues were manifested in the action and lives of the different popes. According to Scott, they reflect the portrait of a perfect papal ruler,³¹¹ presenting for the viewer a *mirror of popes*.³¹² The *Sala di Costantino* contains, as Scott sees it, the most fully developed fresco cycle belonging to this tradition.³¹³ These scenes contains eight figures of popes, each named and flanked by personifications of their most outstanding virtues.³¹⁴ The accompanying narrative sections are partly illustrated with some selected scenes from the life of Costantine. They show the emperor giving obedience to the Church, as in the scene *Baptism of Constantine by Pope Silvester*.³¹⁵ Scott asserts that these frescoes in the *Sala di Costantino*, was frequently minted for iconographic precedents among artists working for papal patrons.³¹⁶ He finds for instance that this fresco cycle might have had large influence on the planning and execution of the fresco by Pietro da Cortona in Palazzo Barberini. In total, ten out of the fourteen virtual personifications in the *Sala di Costantino* is repeated in the fresco by Cortona.³¹⁷

³⁰⁹ The fresco programme in Palazzo Farnese in Rome, *The Loves of the Gods*, by Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), is based on mythological scenes, illustrating among other *The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*. On the other side, the iconographic programme of the frescoes in Villa Farnese in Caprarola, express the glory of the family. The frescoes by Taddeo (1529-66) and Federico Zuccari (1542/43-1609) in *Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani*, 1557-66, (*The Room of the Farnese Deeds*) illustrates the most honourable moments in the lives of the Farnese.

³¹⁰ The ceiling decoration of the *Camerino*, is from 1595-1596/97, while the ceiling decoration of the *Galleria Farnese*, Palazzo Farnese, is from about 1597-1600, Posner 1971: 39 and 49.

³¹¹ To put it more precise; their purpose is to reflect or portrait the perfect papal ruler.

³¹² The notion is from Scott 1991:160. Scott compares this to the literary genre of princely mirrors (*specula*) found in the political theory of the period, Scott 1991:160.

³¹³ Scott 1991:161.

³¹⁴ It contains Peter (*Ecclesia Aeternitas*), Clement I (*Moderatio, Comitas*), Alexander I (*Fides, Religio*), Urban I (*Justitia, Caritas*), Damasus I (*Prudentia, Pax*), Leo I (*Innocentia, Veritas*), Silvester I (*Fortitudo*) and Gregory I (*Fulminatio*). See Quednau 1979:157– 326 and Scott 1991:161.

³¹⁵ There are also two other scenes illustrating the manifestation of the papal virtues and God's action in the world, Scott 1991:161.

³¹⁶ Scott 1991:161.

³¹⁷ Scott 1991:161.

Chiari joins this tradition when illustrating the virtues of Marc Antonio, although reducing the number of virtues represented to four.³¹⁸ The virtues, however, do not have the same obvious focus in the fresco by Chiari as they do in *Sala di Costantino*. Although the four virtues of *Justitia*, *Prudentia*, *Temperantia* and *Fortitudo* are placed in the centre of the fresco, the only virtue which could be interpreted as illustrated extensively is *Fortitudo*, through the references to the *Battle of Lepanto* with the beaten Turks. In this way the courage of the Colonna family in general and Marc Antonio in particular is represented through the presence of *Fortitudo*. As I will discuss further in the next chapter about visual communication, the heraldic symbol of the column serves to connect *Fortitudo* and the House of Colonna, as they both had the column as their symbol.³¹⁹

Rather than directly focusing on virtues, the fresco by Chiari seems instead to focus on legitimizing a place for Marc Antonio among the meritorious men, as an immortal hero. To legitimize this elevation, Chiari reminds us not only about the virtues, but also about Marc Antonio's achievements and the result of him possessing these virtues. The Church of Rome is showing its gratitude, and Europe is the leading continent of the world. In this focus on a purely secular family hero, the fresco differs from most of the other fresco cycles mentioned here, both the ones in the papal palace and the ones in the private palaces.

In *Sala di Clementina* the virtues are connected to Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini, (1592-1605) in Palazzo Barberini the virtues are connected to Pope Urban VIII Barberini, and in *Sala dei Cento Giorni* the virtues are connected to Pope Paul III Farnese (1534-1549).³²⁰ Scenes from the family history were not common in decorating *Grand Galleries* neither in Roman palaces during the baroque nor in Italy as such.³²¹ Such scenes were more usual in the *Sala Grande* in the private palaces.³²² By choosing their history as theme for their gallery, the

³¹⁸ See note 43 in chapter 2, where I noted that in the fresco *Divine Knowledge, Eternity* is counted as a virtue. In the fresco by Chiari *Eternity* is present in the guise of *Immortality*, but in this context, *Immortality* is more represented as a reward for brave deeds than a virtue. Interpreted in this way, there will be four virtues in the fresco by Chiari.

³¹⁹ As discussed above, the column serves the same function towards *Hercules*, who also had the column as a symbol.

³²⁰ The embellishment of the Palazzo Colonna took place almost 300 years after their pope Martin V, Colonna, was in office, while the frescoes in the Barberini palace was made during the papacy of Pope Urban VIII Barberini, the *Aeneas cycle* in Palazzo Pamphilj was mostly ordered by Pope Innocent X, the *Sala Clementina* during the papacy of Pope Clemens VIII, the frescoes in the Pamphilj palace at the Piazza Navona during the papacy of Pope Innocent X and the frescoes of the *Sala dei Centi Giorni*, in the Palazzo della Cancelleria during the papacy of Pope Paul III Farnese, although ordered by the popes nephew.

³²¹ Strunck 2007:237.

³²² According to Strunck, this could for instance be large republican or monarchic audience halls, such as the *Sala Regia* in the Vatican Palace, the *Salone dei Cinquecento* in the Palazzo Vecchio, the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio* in the Doge's palace. See Strunck 2007:237.

Colonna family communicates that the gallery was planned for official use. This meant that the gallery of the Palazzo Colonna was meant for the functions of the *Sala Grande*.³²³

What further distinguish the Chiari fresco are the references to an actual historical event. Nevertheless, Chiari was not the first to refer to historical events in large fresco programmes during the 16th and 17th centuries. In *Sala Clementina* the virtues are accompanied by two historical scenes connected to St Clement, alluding to Clement VIII, who commissioned the frescoes.³²⁴ As is the case with the fresco by Chiari, these narrative scenes are illustrating the effects of these virtues.³²⁵ The Chiari fresco does, nevertheless, not refer to any strictly factual historical scenes. The elements unmistakably referring to the role of Marc Antonio in the *Battle of Lepanto* are more a frame of reference than a representation of a specific incident within this battle.³²⁶ Another interesting fresco in relation to the question of narrative scenes from a family history is the cycle of *Sala dei Cento Giorni*, which represents Pope Paul III Farnese conducting different tasks appropriate to the virtues which are attached to him.³²⁷ In this way, the frescoes abandon the more usual glorification and instead present some *quasi-historical* scenes from the life of Paul III.³²⁸ Scott underlines that there are *few historical precedents for this usage [...] most papal cycles of the period have exhibited less specificity*.³²⁹ What gives the fresco by Chiari a special position within this tradition is the fact that it refers to a secular personate, although the Colonna family also had a pope, Martin V, in 1417 to 1431. This pope is not referred to at all.³³⁰

This introduces another aspect of the Chiari fresco, where it differs from most other fresco cycles mentioned here, its stronger secular sentiment. Even if the Church of Rome is represented in the fresco, the main theme is connected to the secular hero. This separates the Chiari fresco from comparable frescoes in other private palaces as for instance the Barberini palace, even if *Divine Providence* to a large extent has a double *secular-ecclesiastical*³³¹ content. As Scott state about Cortona's *Divine Providence*, the *iconographic prototypes of the*

³²³ See Strunck 2007:237 and section 5.2.

³²⁴ Scott 1991:162.

³²⁵ Scott 1991:163.

³²⁶ An example of a representation of a specific incident is the fresco by Pietro da Cortona in Palazzo Pamphilj at Piazza Navona, where we find a scene illustrating Aeneas' founding of Rome, Leone 2008:267.

³²⁷ The narrative scenes shows *Nations Paying Homage to Paul III*, *Paul III Ordering the Rebuilding of St. Peter's*, *Paul III Awarding Benefices* and *Paul III Blessing the Treaty of Nice*, see Reinhardt 1996: 293-98. The frescoes were ordered by the nephew to Paul III Farnese, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

³²⁸ Scott 1991:164.

³²⁹ Scott 1991:164. Scott mentions the audience chamber in the Lateran Palace decorated by Callixtus II as another example of this specificity in historical narratives.

³³⁰ I will return to this very interesting fact in the next chapter about visual communication, where I relate this fact to the relevant agenda at the turn of the 17th century, with the question about the Turkish expansion and decline in east Europe.

³³¹ The notion is used by Scott 1991:160.

salon ceiling have a common theme: the ethical character and political actions of the ideal pope and his family.³³² Another example of the double secular-ecclesiastical sphere is Salviati's wall scenes in the Palazzo Farnese, from 1552-53 and 1564, where the enthroned Paul III meets Aeneas on the opposite wall.³³³ This duality signals that the ambitions of the families are both secular and ecclesiastical. In the fresco by Chiari most scenes and spheres are secular. In the ecclesiastical scene, the representation of the Church, the primary intention does not seem to be to elevate the Christian virtues, but to elevate the role of Marc Antonio in keeping the Church in office. In this way, the fresco signals strongly, that the courage or *fortitudo* of the Colonna family in general³³⁴ and Marc Antonio in particular³³⁵ are indispensable in keeping the Church of Rome in office.³³⁶ This representation also indicates the same duality of interests as represented by both Cortona in the Barberini palace and by Salviati in the Farnese palace. The same is true for the selection of the four virtues, which are relevant both for the secular and ecclesiastical sphere. This bifurcation is important in understanding the dual, both secular and ecclesiastical, aspiration of any papal or non-papal family in Rome during the 16th and 17th centuries. This accounts both to the Barberini, the Farnese and the Colonna families, although the references are not as clear cut in the fresco by Chiari as it is in for instance the ceiling of the audience room at the Farnese palace at Caprarola, where this is illustrated by the dichotomy of *Temporal Sovereignty* and *Spiritual Sovereignty*.³³⁷ With regard to ecclesiastical ambitions, however, it is interesting that the three theological virtues, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*, are not represented in the fresco by Chiari.³³⁸

At first sight, there is no obvious reference to peace in the fresco by Chiari, as we see it for instance in the *Sala dei Cento Giorni*, deriving from a proper exercise of the papal prerogatives or in Cortona's scenes in the *Prudentia*, with the closing of the door to the

³³² Scott 1991:160.

³³³ Scott 1991:165.

³³⁴ This is represented by *Fortitudo* embracing the column.

³³⁵ This is represented with the references to the Marc Antonio's role in the *Battle of Lepanto*.

³³⁶ It is interesting comparing this emphasis on *Fortitudo* in keeping the Church of Rome in office in Chiari's fresco, with the fresco by Vasari in *Sala dei Cento Giorni*, where the virtues of *Minerva* and *Wisdom* are combined above the scene where Pope Paul III Farnese is approving the designs for the new church of St Peter. This has been interpreted to illustrate that it was the *Wisdom* of the Farnese Pope Paul III that provided for the future of the Church of Rome, Scott 1991:164, while it was the *Fortitudo* of Marc Antonio II Colonna that provided for the future of the same church in the fresco by Chiari. Scott points out that this combination of *Wisdom* and *Providence* reappear in the fresco by Cortona in Palazzo Barberini, where, as Scott says it, *the two are juxtaposed in the principal personifications of the two main painted ceilings*, that is the ceiling by Cortona and the one by Sacchi, Scott 1991:164. In this way, virtues connected to the personages in the different families, is visualized as essential in keeping the Church of Rome in office, which in turn makes the family indispensable for the Church.

³³⁷ The fresco is painted by Taddeo Zuccaro in 1562-63. See Partridge 1978:494 and 500.

³³⁸ The exclusion of the theological virtues underlines that the Colonna wanted to focus on strength and honour in the battle against the Turks and in keeping the Church of Rome in office and not on clerical merits and deeds.

Temple of Janus. On the contrary, by first sight the fresco by Chiari signalizes military strength and sovereignty. On the other side, peace could be interpreted as referred to through the references to war, in that war brings peace. In this case, peace is seen in relation to a *cosmic context*. In representing the four continents, the event is set into a worldwide context; the battle and the victory are important for the total world order and harmony between the continents. In this, we see that *Europe* has a prominent position, as she is seated dominantly in front of the group, while *Africa* and *America* seems to be the less prominent continents, represented as almost naked. *Asia* is represented in-between, becoming more and more interesting for *Europe* through the 17th century for both imported goods and culture.

The three scenes in sum; firstly the defeated Turks,³³⁹ secondly the balance between the four continents and the continuation of the world order, and thirdly the Church of Rome still in office because of the achievements of Marc Antonio at Lepanto, might signify some sort of political balance of power and peace. In this way, the references to the victory over the Turks are related to *Peace*, seen from the point of view of the Church of Rome and in a cosmic context. In the fresco by Salviati in Palazzo Farnese,³⁴⁰ we see for instance *Peace* on the popes left side, in triumph over a Turk bound to her feet. This illustrates that in the 16th century, it might be seen as relevant to connect *Peace* to the triumph over the Turks.

Also in the fresco by Cortona in the Barberini palace we see this parallel between military force and peace. In the beginning of the section ending with the closing of the door to the *Temple of Janus* and peace attained, we see three men in a smithy, making weapons. This might symbolize that the pope's preparations for war contributes to the preservation of peace, and therefore also to the safeguard of the Church, against external aggression.³⁴¹ Also in the fresco by Chiari, the emphasis on military strength could be read as a statement of peace. This underlines that the military strength and braveness of the Colonna family in general and Marc Antonio in particular is the best guarantee for peace and safeguard against external aggression threatening the position of the Church.³⁴² These brave deeds will also guarantee the immortality of Marc Antonio. Therefore, *Hercules* requests *Immortality* to give Marc Antonio

³³⁹ As a symbol of the beating of the Muslims which by this act is kept away from conquering Europe and the power of the Church of Rome.

³⁴⁰ In the *Sala dei fasti Farnesiani*, named after the frescoes by Francesco Salviati and Taddeo Zuccari who aimed at glorifying the origins of the Farnese family. See Cresti and Rendina 2007:124.

³⁴¹ Pietro da Cortona uses the same allegory in the Pamphilj palace where *Venus Asks Vulcan to Forge Weapons for Aeneas*, in the western section of the Aeneas cycle gallery, made 1651-54.

³⁴² This espousal of peace in the Chiari fresco makes a link to the fresco cycle in the Pamphilj palace, where peace and justice triumphs in the end as Rome is established under the providence of Aeneas, according to Scott's interpretation of the Pamphilj cycle, Scott 1997:91 and Leone 2008:270. (cf. note 150, p 270 in Leone 2006). In this Leone points out, that this theme extols the virtue of Innocent X Pamphilj, Leone 2008:270.

a seat among the other meritorious men. This makes the concept of *immortal fame* acquired through *virtue* a central theme in Chiari's fresco, just as it is in the fresco by Cortona in the Barberini palace.³⁴³

In Chiari's representation of *Europe, America, Asia* and *Africa*, he is close to Ripa's description in his *Iconologia*. At the same time he is probably inspired to a certain degree by Pozzo's interpretation of the continents in the nearby Church of San Ignazio.³⁴⁴ In the fresco *Saint Ignatius in Glory, The Mission of the Jesuit Order*, from 1688-94, Andrea Pozzo (1642-1709) illustrates the worldwide reach of the Jesuits' missionary activity by illustrating the four continents. In comparing these two representations, we find that the continents are much more compact and limited in Chiari's version. This might be related to the more strict classic representation by Chiari compared to Pozzo, which is filled with more movement and action.³⁴⁵

What is interesting is that Marc Antonio is not crowned with a stellar crown, as in the fresco by Cortona in Palazzo Barberini.³⁴⁶ Instead, *Immortality* is holding her symbol, the snake circle, and with her left hand she is assigning Marc Antonio to the empty chair next to her. Where *Immortality* is about to actually crowning the heraldic symbol of the Barberini family in *Divine Providence*, Marc Antonio is not crowned by *Immortality* in the Chiari fresco.³⁴⁷ On the other side, *Victory* is on her way, crowning Marc Antonio with the laurel wreath. This might be related to Marc Antonio as a secular hero.

As we then see, fame, honour and immortality are the positive rewards in the fresco by Chiari following the brave deeds of Marc Antonio. Here, Chiari, to a large extent follows the main ideas in Cortona's fresco in the Barberini palace

³⁴³ Scott 1991:168.

³⁴⁴ See also section 2.1.

³⁴⁵ Pozzo represents *America* for instance as fighting a tiger. The other three continents are represented much more calm. In terms of iconology, Chiari is much closer to Pozzo's representations of *Asia* and *Africa*, than to his representations of *America* and *Europe*. In the representation of *Europe*, Chiari emphasizes the presence of the Church and the Princes and Kings of Europe much more than in the fresco by Pozzo, where these references are omitted. This might be purposely done, in stating the loyalty of the Colonna family both to the pope and the European monarchs. See also section 6.3. Chiari is here much more in line with the representations in *Iconologia*, Ripa 1611/1976:355.

³⁴⁶ By this act, it is reasonable to interpret the crowning of pope Urban VIII Barberini to eternal honour and glory, Merz 1991:243. Merz sees *Immortality* as the most important personification in the fresco by Cortona. At the same time the personification of *Rome* is crowning the heraldic symbol of the Barberini family, with the papal tiara. The heraldic symbol with the three large bees is encircled or held by the three theological virtues *Faith, Hope* and *Charity*, with *Religion* on the top of the emblem. Also *Fama* is represented in the Cortona fresco, as an announcer of the honour of the Barberini family.

³⁴⁷ This is unless we interpret the snake circle as a symbol of a crown. In general, we are here talking about two different contexts. Pope Urban VIII and the Barberini family are crowned to be selected as the leader of the papal church, while Marc Antonio and the Colonna family have contributed to the saving of the Church of Rome.

Another interesting parallel between Cortona's work and Chiari's is the way in which the main persons in the frescoes are received in heaven. Different from for instance the principle used in *Sala Clementia*, where Pope Clemens VIII Aldobrandini is represented as received in heaven, there are no receivers identified, other than the divine light, in the apotheosises painted by Cortona and Chiari.³⁴⁸ On the other side, the different allegorical and mythological personifications in both frescoes could be interpreted as participating in the realisation of the *apotheosis*.³⁴⁹ But the allegorical and mythological representation, however, seems to take part more actively in the apotheosis in *Divine Providence* than in the fresco by Chiari, where the personifications are seated more passively.³⁵⁰ They almost look like they are waiting for God's grace to take place. This might also be a question of style, as the classical style of the Chiari fresco is calmer and more in control.

The focus of the fresco by Chiari, with the attainment of glory and eternal fame through brave deeds, virtues and strength, departs from the *Divine Providence* where glory and fame are attained through virtue and wisdom. Unlike the Barberini family, the Colonna had a long and glorious past to recount. Therefore, what was rendered in abstract allegories in the Barberini palace was made more specific in the Palazzo Colonna. Other families as well within the Roman nobility had a glorious past, as we for instance see in the depiction of the heroic military achievement by the Farnese in the Farnese palace.³⁵¹ What is made explicit both in Palazzo Farnese, in the frescoes by Salviati,³⁵² and in the Palazzo Colonna, partly in the fresco by Chiari,³⁵³ becomes more abstract allegories in the Barberini palace, in the fresco by Cortona. In this regard, the Colonna family presents their personal history almost with the same grandiloquence as the Medici family in Florence, through the frescoes by Giorgio

³⁴⁸ In the fresco by Cortona the divine receiver is nevertheless interpreted to be symbolised by this light, Martin 1977:226.

³⁴⁹ The concept *apotheosis* comes from Greek *apotheosis*, meaning *be done to God*, describing representations of a person's glorification.

³⁵⁰ See Merz 1991:243, where he discusses this in the case of the Cortona fresco.

³⁵¹ Next to the scene of Aeneas by Francesco Salviati in the *Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani*, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, we see depictions of *Ranuccio Farnese Appointed General of the Church by Eugene IV in 1435* by Francesco Salviati, which is a parallel to the fresco by Coli and Gherardi in the Colonna gallery showing Marc Antonio being appointed by the Pope Pius V, and *Pietro Farnese Leading the Florentines in Battle Against the Pisans in 1363* also by Francesco Salviati, which is a parallel to the painting by Coli and Gherardi in the Colonna gallery showing Marc Antonio leading the Holy League in the *Battle of Lepanto*. Both frescoes by Salviati are painted between 1552 and 1556.

³⁵² The deeds of the Farnese family, which culminated in the reign of their family pope, Paul III, represented in the frescoes by Salviati in the great *Sala* of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, is interpreted to present the Farnese as *embodying the heroism of the ancient gods but dedicated to the defence of Christianity*, Leone 2008:211.

³⁵³ The frames of references are highly concrete in the Chiari fresco, with reference to the *Battle of Lepanto*, but we have to look at the frescoes by Coli and Gherardi in the main hall of *Galleria Colonna* to find representations of concrete events comparable to the two in the Farnese palace.

Vasari in *Sala Grande* in Palazzo Vecchio,³⁵⁴ which promulgates the influential and enduring presence and importance of the Medici family in Florentine history.³⁵⁵ Among the Roman nobility, the Colonna family was rather alone in holding such a meritorious hero as Marc Antonio II.

When it comes to the central position of *Hercules* in the Chiari fresco, I have mentioned earlier that there probably is a connection to the fictitious understanding of genealogy, with *Hercules* as one of the ancestors of the Colonna family.³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, *Hercules* was a well known reference during the 17th century, and we meet him in several different contexts as an allegory of heroic or physical strength. It is for instance relevant to interpret the representation of *Hercules* in *Divine Providence* in light of this, in that *Hercules* is represented rising his wooden hammer against the *harpies*, symbolising the evil, and vanquishing them.³⁵⁷ In Cortona's fresco, the scene is interpreted as representing,

*the importance of keeping in check those secular rulers who [...] seek to increase their political power at the expense of the Church. [...] Guarding against this ever-present threat ensures the preservation of the pontiff's temporal authority.*³⁵⁸

This interpretation of *Hercules*' role in the fresco by Cortona is interesting compared to the role of *Hercules* in the fresco by Chiari. The fact that *Hercules* is represented as presenting Marc Antonio to *Immortality* could build on a parallel to the allegory of *Hercules* as a protector of the Church. This also strengthens the impression of Marc Antonio as a protector of the Church, based on his heroic or physical strength. The possibility of building this parallel, supported by the use of *Hercules* in the fresco by Cortona in the Barberini palace, might have inspired Chiari or his principals within the Colonna family to include and give *Hercules* such a prominent position. The Colonna family was nevertheless capable of building a unique visual relation between their family and *Hercules* through the use of the column, in that the column referred to both.

In presenting Marc Antonio to *Immortality*, Chiari gives *Hercules* a similar role in his fresco as we see in Pietro da Cortona's *Hercules Presents the Prince to Jupiter* from 1642 in the vault of *Sala di Giove* in Palazzo Pitti, Florence. Here, *Hercules* presents the Medici

³⁵⁴ These frescoes are from 1562-71.

³⁵⁵ This covers the time from the antiquity and to the rule of Duke Cosimo I. see Leone 2008:211.

³⁵⁶ See section 4.2 and Mugnos 1658.

³⁵⁷ Scott 1991:167. The whole scene in the Cortona fresco might be interpreted as referring to the *Good government* under pope Urban VIII Barberini.

³⁵⁸ Scott 1991:167.

prince to Jupiter, the King of Gods.³⁵⁹ In this way, the fresco presents the Medici prince as *divinely chosen* and almost *destined to rule* according to Leone's interpretations.³⁶⁰ This is an interesting parallel to the representation by Chiari, where an obvious interpretation is that the House of Colonna, through the achievements of Marc Antonio, is *destined to rule*, or at least that they are meant to have a central position in Roman social and political life.

In the use of Rome as a reference, the Chiari fresco iconographically departs from several of its predecessors. While the references to Rome for instance in the Cortona fresco in the Barberini palace refers to the *Church of Rome*, the references to Rome in the Chiari fresco is most probably *also* meant to underline the connection between the House of Colonna and the city of Rome, emphasising the family as belonging to the old Roman nobility. In this, the Colonna family separates themselves from the rising papal families in Rome, as for instance the Barberini. On the other side, the Colonna family was not the first and only among the Roman nobility to use *Rome* as a reference for the history of their family. Also the Pamphilj family, for instance, linked themselves to Rome's glorious past in the embellishment of their palace. In the second *anticamera* in their palace at Piazza Navona, Giacinto Gimignani designed in 1648 a frieze depicting scenes from Livy's history of Rome. Among the scenes are, *The finding of Romulus and Remus*³⁶¹ and *Romulus dedicating the spoils to Jupiter*.³⁶² These representations are interesting compared to those of the Chiari fresco. The prominence of *Romulus* in the Pamphilj palace might be meant to evoke the pseudo-history of *Numa Pompilius*, born on the day *Romulus* founded Rome and the ancestor of the papal Pamphilj family.³⁶³ This fictitious history related to the House of Pamphilj is a parallel to the genealogical text related to the Colonna family as we find it in Mugnos.³⁶⁴ In the decorated ceiling next to the frieze, the Pamphilj heraldry was incorporated, which in sum is said to connect the family explicitly to the history enacted in the frieze below.³⁶⁵

This representation in the Pamphilj palace might have inspired the Colonna family in illustrating their attachment to the city of Rome. On the other side, the presentation of the old Roman roots in the Pamphilj palace might also have functioned as some sort of *provocation* for the Colonna family, who perhaps felt their roots in Rome to be deeper than those of the

³⁵⁹ Campbell 1977:130, see illustration 13.

³⁶⁰ Leone 2008:267.

³⁶¹ On the south wall.

³⁶² On the north wall.

³⁶³ Leone 2008:223.

³⁶⁴ Mugnos 1658.

³⁶⁵ Leone 2008:224.

Pamphilj family.³⁶⁶ Just as *Aeneas*, the son of *Venus*, was recognized as a fictitious predecessor of the ancestor of the Pamphilj family, *Numa Pompilius*,³⁶⁷ so was *Hercules* for the Colonna family. But while the Pamphilj just had this fictitious story to tell, the House of Colonna could also tell a story about a real Roman hero. In this context, the reference to the city of Rome, with the river god *Tiber*, and *Romulus* and *Remus*, becomes a highly diplomatic and tacit representation of the Colonna family's long standing in Roman history, but for the Colonna family, perhaps a necessary one, given the extensive references made to Rome by the House of Pamphilj in the palace at Piazza Navona.³⁶⁸

This strong attachment between the story told and the patron's family is also related to the use of the family emblem, the heraldic symbol. The massive column near the border of the Chiari fresco immediately promulgates the family's identity. This draws a parallel between the fresco by Chiari and other Roman fresco cycles during the 16th and 17th centuries, as *Divine Providence*, where a reference to the heraldic symbol is placed in the centre. References to heraldic symbols are, nevertheless, not always this evident. In Preimesberger's reading of the Aeneas cycle in the Pamphilj palace, the references to the Pamphilj emblems are more indirect and based on a link between the heraldic symbol and the three goddesses, where *Venus* is read to symbolize the Dove, *Juno* the Lily and *Minerva* the Olive branch.³⁶⁹ Heraldic symbols are also used in Palazzo Pamphilj to underline the message of the fresco. In both end walls of the gallery, we see the Pamphilj coat of arms with a wing on both sides respectively. Underneath, there is a Latin text saying *Sub umbra alarum tuar(um)* meaning *Under the shadow of your wings*. This quote is from the Bible, and it alludes to the wings of the dove in their coat of arms.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ Leone interpret the whole architectural and sculptural decoration in the Pamphilj gallery as efforts meant to reinforce *the assertion of ancient roots explicated in the paintings*, Leone 2008:272. Leone connects for instance the presence of the *Serliana* window as well as the Roman emperors which are portrayed in busts and placed in niches in the wall in the gallery of the Pamphilj family to the Roman Empire, Leone 2008:272. Leone sees this as a linkage between Innocent X and his family and the foundation of Rome and Christianity. Leone 2008:272.

³⁶⁷ Leone 2008:272.

³⁶⁸ Perhaps even more provocative for the Colonna family was the superior theme in the fresco cycle of Pietro da Cortona in the Pamphilj palace. In Preimesberger's interpretation *Das innere Ziel des epischen Geschehens ist in dem Mittelbild verkörpert (Versöhnung der Göttinnen und überreichung der Waffen durch Venus): das durch Aeneas begründete Imperium Romanum in Gestalt der Dea Roma*, in English: *The interior end of the epic action is personified in the picture in the middle (the reconciliation the Goddess and the presentation of the weapon through Venus): that the Roman Empire in the shape of Dea Roma was founded through Aeneas*, Preimesberger 1976:251.

³⁶⁹ In Preimesberger's words *Da die Taube der Venus, die Lilie der Juno und der ölzweig der Minerva heilig ist, verbinden und versöhnen sich im Zeichen Pamphiljs die drei Göttinnen*. Preimesberger 1976:252. In English *As the dove of Venus, the lily of Juno and the olive branch of Minerva is holy, the sign of the three goddess are connected and reconciled in the sign of the Pamphiljs*. The Dove with the olive branch is also part of the embellishment in the Pamphilj gallery.

³⁷⁰ See Premiesberger 1976:252-53.

The binding of Chronos to the column visualizes that fate is bound to the Colonna family.³⁷¹ In using the symbolic *binding to the column*, Chiari makes use of an interesting iconographic representation, which goes back to several representations of Marc Antonio II Colonna. On both the *Board of honour* for Marc Antonio from 1590³⁷² in the *Sala dei Fasti Cosulari e Trionfali*³⁷³ in *Palazzo dei Conservatori*³⁷⁴ and on the pedestal of the sculpture of honour of Marc Antonio in the *Sala dei Capitani* from 1595,³⁷⁵ Turks are represented as bounded to the column with chains. This tiding of the defeated to the column might be a symbol of victory for the Colonna family in general or for Marc Antonio Colonna in particular.

In sum, we clearly see that Chiari and his patrons were inspired by the tradition of large Roman fresco cycles in the 16th and 17th centuries, in which the Chiari fresco was a part. This is valid both when it comes to the theme, to the use of allegories and virtues and to the composition in general. Most notable is perhaps the inspiration from the fresco by Pietro da Cortona in the Barberini palace when it comes to fame, honour and immortality following brave deeds of the family hero. As I have demonstrated, the fresco by Chiari, nevertheless, also differs in some important aspects. Most interesting is the stronger secular statement. In the next section, I will discuss the fresco in relation to the frescoes in the main hall of the *Galleria Colonna*.

5.3.2. The Chiari fresco in relation to the other frescoes of the Galleria Colonna

In theme, albeit not in style, it is difficult to read the fresco by Chiari in isolation from the other frescoes in the *Galleria Colonna*. The *throne room* is directly connected to the main hall of the *Galleria Colonna*,³⁷⁶ separated by a short stairway and the mentioned columns. The roof of the main gallery is decorated in 1675 by Coli and Gherardi, who worked as a team.³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ See section 6.3 for the codified meaning of the tiding of *Chronos* to the column.

³⁷² Designed by Antonio Tempesta and executed by Meo Bassi in marble, see Leuschner 1999:619.

³⁷³ The *Sala dei Fasti Cosulari e Trionfali*, in English: *The Hall of the Heroic deeds and Triumphs*, is also called the *Sala dei Lupa* as it houses the famous bronze of the she wolf nursing *Romulus* and *Remus*.

³⁷⁴ See illustration 14.

³⁷⁵ See illustration 15.

³⁷⁶ The large gallery is created by Antonio del Grande between 1654 and 1665. The gallery is 39 meter long, 10.5 meter wide and 13.1 meter high. Roettgen 2007:226. The construction of the two anterooms, the *throne room* decorated by Chiari, and the hall decorated by Ricci, began in 1674.

³⁷⁷ The work with the frescoes was originally started by Giovanni Paolo Schor, 1615-74 (also called Giovanni Paolo Tedesco, Italian for *German*, because he was born in Innsbruck, originally named Johann Paul Schor). After his death in March 1674, the work was continued by his son, but from 1675 to 1678 Giovanni Coli, 1636-81, and Filippo Gherardi, 1643-1704, took over. In 1678-81 there was an interruption. In this period Coli dies and Gherardi completed the frescoes alone in 1682-85, Roettgen 2007:227.

On the west side of the great hall, there is another anteroom, or hall, decorated by Sebastiano Ricci in 1693-95.³⁷⁸ The five *riquadri* in the main hall illustrates highlights from the military career of Marc Antonio II Colonna, in the same way as we see in *Sala dei Cento Giorni* by Vasari. Among the scenes is the appointment of Marc Antonio by Pope Pius V Ghislieri, a scene from the *Battle of Lepanto*, where the papal fleet is represented as equals to the Turkish fleet, and a scene depicting the construction of the statue of Marc Antonio in the *Sala dei Capitani* in *Palazzo dei Conservatori*.

Ricci conforms to this theme in his fresco *The Sea Battle at Lepanto*. But while one of the frescoes by Coli and Gherardi brings forward the moment of battle, the battle has ended in the fresco by Ricci. What we witness is Marc Antonio being crowned for his achievements. Marc Antonio is represented flying on a dark cloud while being crowned by *Victory*.³⁷⁹ The Turks and papal forces are not illustrated as equals as in the battle scene in the main gallery,³⁸⁰ but as vanquished and pushed into the corners in fear. In this way, those represented as equals in the fight depicted by Coli and Gherardi, are represented as victorious and defeated respectively in Ricci's fresco. This applies also to the Chiari fresco. In this way, the work by Coli and Gherardi is important in setting the stage for the themes of the frescoes by Ricci and Chiari. In the representation by Chiari, an even more convincing impression of Marc Antonio as unbeatable and superior is given than in the representation by Ricci.

In discussing the differences between the frescoes in the main hall of the gallery by Coli and Gherardi and the frescoes in the two anterooms it is interesting to note that the frescoes in the main hall were accomplished during the reign of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna and those in the anterooms during the reign of his son, Filippo II Colonna. Both frescoes completed under Filippo II Colonna represent Marc Antonio as a greater hero than is the case under Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna.³⁸¹ This change in representation which began with Ricci and continued with Chiari might indicate a need or wish to represent the family hero as even more superior in the year 1700 than in the 1670s.

As an apotheosis, the Chiari fresco is more an interpretation of the historical events represented in the main hall than a description. This interpretation is done in a more

³⁷⁸ Sebastiano Ricci, 1659-1734, from Venice was a rather unknown painter in Rome at this time.

³⁷⁹ *Victory* is represented in the same way in this fresco as in the Chiari fresco, with a palm branch and she is heading for Marc Antonio with a laurel wreath in her hand.

³⁸⁰ See illustration 16.

³⁸¹ Given that the question about the Turks had come to some sort of end after the victory in Vienna in 1683, it is possible that Filippo II Colonna wanted to strengthen the impression of Marc Antonio's superiority even further than his father, to remind us that the Colonna family not only had their part in the struggle, but also in the victory. This victory of the west was especially confirmed in the later peace in Karlowitz in 1699. At this time the embellishment by Ricci was completed.

allegorical way.³⁸² Thus, this fresco represents some sort of continuation of the frescoes in the main hall, and as such, it contributes to a unity in the fresco programme in Galleria Colonna. This continuity is strengthened by the repetition in the fresco of references to victory and superior force. This accounts especially for the extensive use of Turkish signs and military references in the embellishment of both the main hall of the gallery by Schor, Coli and Gherardi, the other anteroom by Ricci, and lastly, albeit to a minor extent, by Chiari in the *throne room*. Marc Antonio is also first represented as an classical antique hero by Coli and Gherard.

There is, nevertheless, a stylistic change between the main gallery and the fresco by Chiari. While Chiari is more classical in style, the frescoes in the main gallery follow to a large extent a Venetian tradition both in form and composition,³⁸³ with their colourful, narrative expressions.³⁸⁴ The frescoes by Coli and Gherardi are characterized as a

*foreign element in Roman baroque painting [with its] splendidly colourful decoration of the gallery, in which heraldic, ornamental, and figural motifs combine to create a dizzying spectacle.*³⁸⁵

These scenes are voluminously framed, and along the walls we see a repertoire of symbols referring to war, as for instance draped flags in strong colour, cuirasses and helmets. The embellishments show, in general, a great interest in décor.³⁸⁶

In sum, then, we see that Chiari both in theme and symbolism is influenced by the frescoes in the main hall of the gallery, but that he brings the tribute of Marc Antonio one step further by no longer representing him as fighting the Turks, but as superior and victorious.

³⁸² Also Ricci combines historical events and allegorical comments in his fresco.

³⁸³ Roettgen 2007:227,

³⁸⁴ Both Coli and Gherardi were trained by Pietro da Cortona and had worked in Venice before entering Rome in 1669, Roettgen 2007:227. Since they had been in Venice, they did know about the tradition of Veronese and Tintoretto. In the frescoes by Coli and Gherardi we see a strong connection to for instance the great narrative frescoes by Veronese, as we see it in the Doge palace in Venice. One example is the decoration programme in *Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci*, with roof frescoes by Veroneses, as *Juno overwhelming Venice with grace* from 1553. Another example is *The Triumph of Venice* from 1578-85, also in the Doge palace in Venice.

³⁸⁵ Roettgen 2007:227. The frescoes also have root in a Roman baroque tradition, compared for instance with the ceiling by Pietro da Cortona in Galleria Pamphilj. The main space of the roof in the main hall of *Galleria Colonna* is covered with three large *riquardi* reminiscent both to the large gallery in the Pamphilj palace at Piazza Navona and the large gallery in the Farnese palace. In addition the Colonna gallery has a rectangular *riquardi* at each end of the main space. Besides, the stucco elements in the four corners are not unlike the ones in the corners of Cortona's fresco in the Barberini palace, see also Roettgen 2007:227.

³⁸⁶ This is said to be related to Schor, Roettgen 2007:228. Roettgen describe this as a *confusion of categories* with reference to Hermann Bauer and Hans Sedlmayr; *Rokoko. Struktur und Wesen einer europäischen Epoche*. Du Mont Taschenbuch, Cologne 1991:52, related to the coming rococo style, see Roettgen 2007:228.

6. Strategies for visual communication

In the preceding chapters, I have described and interpreted selected aspects of the Chiari fresco and discussed possible sources for its accomplishment, both textual and contextual. Having unveiled some of the possible intentions behind the fresco from the Colonna's point of view, the question now is in what way these intentions are communicated to an audience through the ordering of signs, symbols and scenes in the fresco. What are the strategies for visual communication used in the fresco?

The social and political intentions behind the selection of symbols and scenes have to be communicated to the audience. What I want to look for in this chapter is the logic and the strategies behind the execution of the fresco in terms of intentions or ends. To this end, I look for the rhetorical move made in the fresco. In what way do the Colonna family and Chiari, through the fresco, actively and strategically create a meaning through the interplay of symbols and scenes?

I will start this discussion by asking, who were the intended audience for this fresco? Then, I shortly discuss to what extent style could be a medium for visual communication. In the third section, I bring this discussion one step further and discuss what *rhetorical manoeuvres*³⁸⁷ might lie behind the ordering of the signs and scenes in the fresco. Finally, I end the chapter by discussing a concept of *strategic contextualization*. What characterizes the context communicated and made relevant for the audience to consider? What might be the strategic consideration behind this choice of contextualization?

6.1. The readers of the message

As a medium of visual communication, an important question concerns the intended audience which was supposed to receive the message of the fresco? As a *throne room*, the room was first and foremost meant for receptions. As a man of several high positions, especially *Gran Contestabile* and ambassador for the King of Naples,³⁸⁸ Filippo II Colonna received many guests probably of elevated social ranking themselves. The *throne room*, together with the main hall of the gallery, was also used for different festive occasions, for

³⁸⁷ This concept was used by Bal and Bryson in their article about semiotics and art history from 1991:179.

³⁸⁸ At the turn of the 17th century, Naples was under the Spanish throne. Alfonso V of Aragon conquered the Kingdom of Naples in 1492.

instance in connection with the *Chinea*.³⁸⁹ As long as participation at these festivals was highly restricted, it is reasonable to assume that it was mostly noblemen who had access to the fresco by Chiari, in addition to ambassadors or messengers from different states and the Church. Given the theme and the messages of the fresco, as I have discussed them in this thesis, they were probably also the intended audience for the fresco. Cardinals, messengers, ambassadors and their equals were the ones influencing assignments and the distribution of high offices attractive for the Colonna family. In addition, the fresco was most likely meant to communicate with the rest of the Roman nobility.

My thesis is that as long as the messages of the fresco are as evident as they are, this in itself is an argument for claiming that these groups also actually saw the fresco. The whole rationality behind the design of the fresco, according to this reasoning, must have been to let selected personates see the fresco. This was the only way the Colonna family could communicate visually with these target groups.

It is likely that the House of Colonna wanted to exhibit their prominence and their virtues both to those who had the power to increase the family's social esteem and political power, through for instance appointment to positions, and to their rivals for these positions, that is, the rest of the Roman nobility.

Another target group might have been the coming generations of the Colonna family, reminding them about their sense of pride, honour and courage. In this way, the fresco might have been a tool for shaping the family's sense of pride and lending moral support to new generations.

When it comes to the Roman nobility as readers of the messages of the fresco, the old and the rising nobility might interpret the symbols and scenes slightly differently. Speaking about symbols concerning origins and family history, members of the rising families, like the Barberini, were perhaps more sensitive than the members of the old Roman families, like the Orsini. Perhaps the latter were more focused on the achievements of the House of Colonna through the deeds of their old hero Marc Antonio. Clerics on the other hand had most likely yet other codes for interpretation, with an expected focus on how the Colonna family had contributed to the wellbeing of the Church of Rome.

Among the rising families of the Roman nobility, there might have been a high degree of recognition, both in terms of social and political ambitions and in terms of the means to reach them. To a large extent, they had a common interest in gaining positions, power and

³⁸⁹ For the *Chinea*, see note 293.

social esteem, both within and outside the Church and they used the same strategies for achieving these ends. Aspiring families visualized their social status and virtues as symbols of their capability and prosperity. It is therefore reasonable to assume that most of the audience shared not only social and political ambitions, but also the codes and conventions through which these ambitions were articulated.

By and large, it is reasonable to assume that the symbols and scenes in Chiari's fresco, as a means of visual communication, are based on a high degree of *shared reality* between the House of Colonna and the readers of the fresco at the turn of the 17th century. Both the Colonna family and the rest of the Roman nobility, as well as the messengers and the ambassadors of the Church and other European states operated to a large extent within the same frame of codes and conventions. This sense of *shared reality* might have been especially likely between the Colonna family and other members of the old Roman nobility, as they shared some historical traits. This means that *social class* was important in relation to the concept of *shared reality* in this context.

6.2. Visual communication through style

Style could also be an instrument for of visual communication. I will not discuss this in detail, but only comment briefly on the use of the classical style in the Chiari fresco.

The classical style as such might be said to be clearer and more legible than the playful and more complex baroque style as we see it for instance in Pietro da Cortona's *Divine Providencia*. The Chiari fresco appears controlled and clear. This means that the symbols and scenes in the fresco become more unequivocal for the readers. As a medium of visual communication this implies that the message of the fresco, the intention, presumably appears more clearly to the readers. Given that I have assumed that the ambitions of the Colonna family were to increase their social and political esteem, for instance through appointments to important positions, this means that the family through their choice of the classical style, state their mission more clearly than would be the case if they had turned to the more swirling baroque style.

To illustrate this and to further evaluate the style in terms of visual communication, it is interesting to compare the Chiari fresco with a fresco made by his teacher Carlo Maratti *The triumph of Clementia*³⁹⁰, (1673-74), in Palazzo Altieri, Rome. The composition of this

³⁹⁰ Schiavo 1962:Tav XXXIX operate with this title, while Seemann 2005:345 name the fresco *Allegory over Clementia*.

fresco has many similarities with the fresco by Chiari, and as a student of Maratti it is likely that Chiari was inspired by this work. In case of the Altieri fresco, two preliminary oil sketches exist³⁹¹ and in comparing these two with the final result in the *Salone dell'Udienza* in Palazzo Altieri,³⁹² we experience a development from a rather dense composition to a more airy and clearly defined one.³⁹³ Especially *Clementia* is given a far more elevated position in the final result³⁹⁴ than in the presumed first oil sketch.³⁹⁵ The void over *Clementia* is larger, as the light over her head becomes increasingly dazzling. In this way, the airy composition and the strong light strengthen each other. This gives *Clementia* a far more prominent and elevated position in the final result than in both the oil sketches. It is interesting to ask whether it was the patron who proposed these remarkable changes or whether Maratti initiated them himself.³⁹⁶ Regardless of this, the result of these adjustments in style is striking for the representation of *Clementia*. Unfortunately, we lack drafts or sketches for the Chiari fresco. But if we assume that he was familiar with the development towards the final fresco in Palazzo Altieri, it is likely that he took this into consideration when planning his own fresco. The expression is much the same. The dazzling light and airy composition accentuates the main message of the fresco and contributes to elevate Marc Antonio.

In preferring a more classical style, the Colonna family might also have wanted to convey a sense of respect for traditions. The classical style is more adapted to the classical antique framing chosen for the fresco, with classical antique costumes and symbols. In this way, and in accordance with Roskill's interpretation,³⁹⁷ costumes could be related to ideologies. An intention to strengthen visually an adherence to the classical ideals might therefore be the reason for this choice of a classical style. This would further stress the association between the House of Colonna and virtues as heroism and courage in addition to being of classical antique Roman decent.

³⁹¹ See illustration 17 and 18, both are in the private collection at Palazzo Altieri. It is difficult to separate the two according to proper order, as both are dated 1673-74. I suggest nevertheless that the sketch in illustration 17 predates the illustration 18 because the latter has a dense composition of the group at the same time as *Clementia* is given a more prominent role, which makes it more in tune with the final ceiling fresco.

³⁹² See illustration 19

³⁹³ This entails when comparing the change in style from the oil sketches in illustration 16 and 17 with the final fresco in illustration 19.

³⁹⁴ See illustration 19.

³⁹⁵ See illustration 17, given that this probably predates the sketch in illustration 18, see note 391 above.

³⁹⁶ Beaven argues that the cartouche form of the fresco was already in place when Maratti started his work and that the Altieri family probably played a central role in the iconography. The fresco may therefore, according to Beaven, better be explained as a result of patronal forces. Beaven 2008:182. Beaven further argues that both Cardinal Camillo Massimo, a friend of the Altieri family and supervising a series of their projects, and that the classical oriented Bellori exerted large influence on papal artistic commissions in general during Pope Clement X Altieri (1670-78) and of the Altieri family in particular. Beaven 2008: 173 and 182.

³⁹⁷ Roskill 1989:96, see also section 3.2.

In the choice of classical style for this fresco, the Colonna family might not be in the vanguard seeking stylistic novelties, in the same way as for instance the more humanistically oriented Barberini family in the *Divine Providence*. The choice of classical style could still be a question of following an artistic trend at the time as *neo-classicism* is said to have been an intended reaction against the *excesses of the baroque*³⁹⁸ at the turn of the 17th century. On the other side, in representing a more political message, the fresco is perhaps so much in control that it might lose some of its intended propagandist fervour. In other words, the controlled atmosphere might moderate the latent political message of the fresco and give it a more diplomatic expression. But as a family with long training in *the art of diplomacy* this moderation, into the style of the fresco, might also have been intended by the patron.

6.3. Communication through an intentional ordering of signs

If we assume that the House of Colonna wanted to visualize that their entitlement to respectable offices both within the Church of Rome, as ambassadors of foreign states and in the civilian Roman society, the question is: In what way does the visual composition of the fresco articulate and communicate these aspirations to the receivers?

As mentioned in chapter two, the most striking of the signs and scenes is perhaps the almost divine light in the middle, with *Immortality* seated almost like a Goddess. This might signal to the audience that the story told in the fresco is of nearly divine or at least glorious kind. The light is perhaps the most expressive element in setting the *modus* of the representation.³⁹⁹ This statement makes a powerful starting point for further interpretation of the fresco in terms of visual communication. What is the main message communicated to us?

The empty chair next to *Immortality* prepares us for some sort of crowning, where *Fama* brings the laurel wreath and *Immortality* holds up the very symbol of immortality against the strong light in the middle of the fresco. Focus is drawn to Marc Antonio, as he ascends to this almost heavenly prepared seat. In placing Marc Antonio in such a context, the statement is clear. What Marc Antonio did was of almost a divine kind and for this he deserves a place among the other meritorious men already seated next to *Immortality*.⁴⁰⁰ The fact that the virtues of *Justitia*, *Temperantia* and *Prudentia* are seated next to the chair waiting for Marc Antonio strengthens the relationship between Marc Antonio and these virtues,

³⁹⁸ Roettgen 2007:7.

³⁹⁹ For these concepts, see section 3.4.2.

⁴⁰⁰ See section 4.3 for a further discussion about the representation of Marc Antonio ascending to a place among this circle of men.

stating that these are his virtues.⁴⁰¹ Given the special position of *Fortitudo*, it is natural to assume that the House of Colonna wanted particularly to be associated with the attributes of *Fortitudo* in communicating their strength and courage. The connection to the Colonna family is stressed by *Fortitudo* embracing the column.⁴⁰² These combinations of symbols indicate that *fortitudo* is the most important hallmark not only of Marc Antonio, but of the whole House of Colonna and a prerequisite for their position. It is to a great extent because of this virtue, if we are to read the fresco literally, Marc Antonio is given immortality and a place among the meritorious men.

If we take into account the quantity of war symbols alluding to the *Battle of Lepanto* and the vanquished Turks, the whole embellishment communicates the importance of physical strength, a quality the Colonna family possesses in excess, according to the signs in the fresco. In this way Marc Antonio continued the deeds of his ancestor *Hercules*. By reminding the coming Colonna generations of this fact, the deeds of the family are brought further and secured for the future.

To symbolize and stress the Colonna family's qualities as leaders, the fresco also includes two *Roman standards*, symbols of leadership and rallying points for the troops. If we include the symbol of *fidelity*, the hand on the top of one of the *standards*, this might symbolise leadership, in the faith of God, against heresy.

To deepen the argument we also saw that *Chronos*, destiny, was bound to the column. In this, the fresco indicates that the destiny depends upon the Colonna family and their strength, *fortitudo*. Chiari also illustrates how *Chronos* is whirling back as Marc Antonio is ascending, looking almost afraid, with his right hand held upwards for some sort of protection. This might symbolize that it is not *Chronos* or *destiny* which decides but rather Marc Antonio and the House of Colonna. Their strength entails that *destiny* is not only bound to them, but almost dominated or controlled by them. Therefore, even *Chronos* is in a way frightened of Marc Antonio, showed by his gestures and glance, just as the Turk close to him.⁴⁰³ The central position of both the Church of Rome and Europe with all its crowns, might communicate visually that also their destinies lay in the hands of the Colonna family.

⁴⁰¹ The extensive use of the heraldic symbol of the Colonna family makes it difficult to separate what are meant as the virtues of Marc Antonio from the virtues of the House of Colonna as such. This might also be the intention. I will discuss this later in this section.

⁴⁰² The heraldic symbol is the most personal sign of a family or House.

⁴⁰³ If we in line with Strunck interpret the sickle in *Chronos*' hand as broken, this might strengthen this interpretation. It might symbolise that in the fight we could imagine between the Colonna and *Chronos*', Marc Antonio and the House of Colonna, the latter were so strong as to break the sickle in *Chronos* hand, as the House of Colonna win the fight. Strunck asserts in interpreting the broken sickle that *Chronos* shouts this to Marc Antonio *mit machtlosen Staunen [...]* Seine Sichel ist zerbrochen, d.h. Zeit und Tod können Colonnas Ruhm

When it comes to the extensive representation of weapons, greatly unordered, this underlines the chaotic atmosphere it must have been, during the battle and figuratively, in Europe during the Turkish threat. Out of this chaos the great hero, Marc Antonio, managed to create order and victory for the Holy League. *Fortitudo* remains calm and in control during all this chaos. This might express the ability of the Colonna family to stay in control, also in times of chaos and great stress, abilities belonging to men of high personal integrity, important virtues for statesmen. This was perhaps exactly the rhetorical impression Filippo II Colonna wanted to make with this fresco. The Colonna family creates order where there is chaos and disorder.

The heraldic symbol of the Colonna family, the column, represents the virtues and deeds of the family and visualizes the identity of the family. This is at the core of the meaning of the coat of arms. In his book *Specchio simbolico overo delle armi gentilitie* from 1667 Andrea Cellonese tries to define the charge expressed by a coat of arms. According to him *the charges as symbols represent and inform the observer of the coat of arms of the virtues of the family (owner)*.⁴⁰⁴ That is to say that the heraldic symbols are meant to promote the family that bears them in their shields. But the intrinsic meaning is in the end decided by the owner of the coat of arms. As Melsaeter expresses it *the charges in a coat of arms mean or symbolise exactly what the owner or observer of the coat of arms thinks or wishes the charges should mean or symbolise*.⁴⁰⁵ This might be the reason why the column is represented in the fresco by Chiari in a rather conspicuous way. But in what way does the column communicate the values and deeds attached to the Colonna family?⁴⁰⁶ Here we have to pay attention to the *codified messages* of the heraldic symbol. Perhaps the most striking codified value ascribed to the column, is communicated through *Fortitudo*, who by embracing the column connects the virtue directly with the Colonna family. The symbolic meaning of this action is increased as the *column* also is one of the attributes of the virtue of *Fortitudo*.⁴⁰⁷ In choosing to represent

nichts anhaben. Strunck 2007:340. In English; [Chronos shout] *with powerless voice [...] his sickle is broken, which means that Time and Death could not damage the honour [or reputation] of the Colonna*, in other words, *Time or Death could not damage the honour of the Colonna family*.

⁴⁰⁴ In a translation by Melsaeter 2008:538 of Andrea Cellonese 1667:46, who originally says *Li Corpi dell'Armi sono Imprese Simboliche, cioè Imagine Scolpite, ò pur dipinte nelli Scudi; le quali altro mostrano alla vista, & altro all'intelletto significano. E come che Simboli, alle virtudi della Famiglia alludono*. See also Fagiolo 2000:107, where he discusses how heraldic symbols allude to the virtues of the family, with references to Cellonese.

⁴⁰⁵ Melsaeter 2008:552.

⁴⁰⁶ As a heraldic symbol, the qualities attached to the column attaches also to the Colonna family.

⁴⁰⁷ The representation of *Fortitudo* by a column is rather widespread in Roman art during the 16th and 17th centuries, even if Ripa does not relate consistently to this matter. In Ripa 1611/1976:179-182 *Fortezza* is among other attributes, represented by a column, but in Ripa 1618/1986, volume I, pp. 168-170 *Fortezza* is not represented by a column. We find for instance *Fortitudo* represented together with a column in *Palazzo Farnese*

Fortitudo by a column, the attribute of *Fortitudo* is concurrent with the heraldic symbol of the House of Colonna themselves. In this context, the representation of *Fortitudo* is given a further meaning than just illustrating a virtue built on strength and courage. As we can see in Ripa, the column as an attribute is also connected to consistence, *Costanza*,⁴⁰⁸ and safety, *Sicurtà*.⁴⁰⁹ Read in this way, the column will also symbolize stability and steadiness. It is natural to interpret this scene as signifying that these virtues connected to the column extends both to the House of Colonna in general and to Marc Antonio in special as an honourable representative of the family. Marc Antonio is more or less to be interpreted as the incarnation of the family virtue, of *fortitude*.⁴¹⁰

The inclusion and use of the *Columna Rostrata* opens for additional interpretations of codified messages attached to the column. This symbol takes the meaning of the column even further, by connecting it to strength and prosperity in war.⁴¹¹ The column is also attached to *Hercules* through being his attribute. As a fictitious ancestor of the Colonna family this adds qualities to the column which is communicated visually, in this case the virtues of strength and heroic courage.

More indirectly, but nevertheless worth mentioning, is the way the column alludes to Christ's passion and death, in particular in connection with the chain in this case tying *Chronos* or *destiny* to the column. In connecting those two symbols, the *column* and the *chain*, the fresco might be said to refer to Christ being tied to a column before being crucified. This hint to the presence of one of the most adored relics of Rome in the 13th century and onwards, a part of Christi column in the Church of Santa Prassede in Rome. This column was brought to Rome by Giovanni Colonna⁴¹² after his crusade to Constantinople in 1204.⁴¹³ In

along one of the long sides in *Galleria Farnese*, painted by Annibale Carracci from 1589 where *Fortitudo* is represented embracing a column, for illustration, see Marzik 1986:106.

⁴⁰⁸ Ripa 1618/1986, volume I, pp 100-101.

⁴⁰⁹ Ripa 1618/1986, volume II, pp 169-170.

⁴¹⁰ The intention and strategy of representing *Fortitudo* by the family symbol, the column, is not unique in Roman art. As long as it is possible to represent *Fortitudo* with several attributes, see Ripa 1611/1976:179-182, the patrons stand free to choose whichever attribute fits their intentions and ambitions best. To combine the representation of *Fortitudo* and the heraldic signs of the patron in question would therefore be a strategically desired choice. Another interesting example of a strategic representation of the virtue of *Fortitudo* is found in *Stanza della Segnatura*, from 1509-11 by Raffaello, where *Fortitudo* appear together with Pope Julius II Rovere. Here *Fortitudo* is represented with a oakbranch, the heraldic symbol of the della Rovere family, and not a column, see Kliemann and Rohlmann 2004: 146 and plate 28 and Ripa 1618/1986, volume I:168-170, who also represent *Fortezza* (*Fortitudo*) with a oak branch.

⁴¹¹ To put it more precise, naval battles.

⁴¹² Giovanni Colonna, *Cardinaldiakon* from 1206, *Cardinalpriest* of San. Prassede from 1217, Lexikon des Mittelalters Band III:55.

⁴¹³ Rehberg 1992:172 and Büchel 2004:41.

this way, the Colonna family might have wanted to further complement and communicate their efforts and achievements for the Church of Rome.⁴¹⁴

As an explanation or perhaps illustration, of the admirable quality of the House of Colonna, Chiari has placed the whole scene with Marc Antonio ascending to immortality in between his achievements for the *Church of Rome* and the *Cosmic context* illustrating the importance of this victory both for the Church of Rome and for the whole world order. The combination of the Church and Europe right in front of each other might communicate that both are guarded by Marc Antonio and the Colonna family. This could be illustrated by the imaginary *line* in the composition,⁴¹⁵ from the *Church of Rome*, through the seated *Immortality* to the seated *Europe* on the other side.

Placing the Church together with the symbol of Rome tells us that this is about the Church of Rome. As such it could also be a hint to the Reformatory Church of the northern and western part of Europe, which had increased their strength at the turn of the 17th century. By contributing to keep the Church of Rome in office, Marc Antonio and with him the House of Colonna not only helped to contain the religious threat from the east, but also helped to dam up against the heresy and dissent within the Christian Church, represented by the Reformatory Church in the north.

This brings us to another rhetorical aspect of the fresco. In stating their meritorious history, the Colonna family stress and legitimate their superior status in historical terms, compared to the newly rich papal families which established themselves during the 16th and 17th centuries.⁴¹⁶ The fresco mirrors this statement not only by referring to a hero within the family and their classical antique ancestors,⁴¹⁷ but also by stating the connection to the state of Rome, as expressed by the river god *Tibern*, and the twins *Romulus* and *Remus*. The House of Colonna visualizes in this way its position as one of the old and real Roman families.

The fresco also includes a classical symbol of triumph, the *Columna Rostrata*. This symbol strongly refers to naval victories which were well known in the Renaissance, according to Leuschner.⁴¹⁸ This underlines the impression of strength and victory. Given that

⁴¹⁴ See also section 5.3.1, where the combination of the *column* and the *chain* is illustrated in several monuments attached to Marc Antonio Colonna.

⁴¹⁵ This is discussed in section 2.2.

⁴¹⁶ Of which the Barberini family is an example.

⁴¹⁷ Note that most families had to take recourse to allegorical stories in their embellishments of grand galleries, for instance the Pamphilj family in their gallery in Palazzo Pamphilj at Piazza Navona, showing the allegorical story about Aeneas. The kind of grand historical programme as we see in *Galleria Colonna* are rare in Roman baroque and neo-baroque during the 16th and 17th centuries.

⁴¹⁸ Leuschner 1999:619.

Marc Antonio is said to have adopted the symbol as his personal emblem,⁴¹⁹ the inclusion of this symbol strengthens the several references to Marc Antonio and to the Colonna family through the use of the column, to the antiquity given that it was a classical symbol and, not the least to naval victories because it was a symbol to signify naval victories. This makes the presence of the *Columna Rostrata* a sign of multiple references. The emblem was also used earlier to honour Marc Antonio.⁴²⁰ As we saw, a plaque was for instance set up in 1572 in *Sala dei Fasti Cosulari e Trionfali* in the *Palazzo dei Conservatori*. This plaque employs the *Columna Rostrata* on its borders.⁴²¹

The same year as the plaque was set up a column was reconstructed on the stairs of the *Palazzo dei Conservatori*.⁴²² In his article, Fischer goes far in asserting that the timing of this triumphal monument and the strengthening of the association between the symbol and Marc Antonio also strengthen the parallel between the naval battle against the Carthaginians at Egadi in 241 B.C. and the battle against the Turks at Lepanto in 1571.⁴²³ This contributed, according to Aikin, to give the *Columna Rostrata* also a specific Christian meaning.⁴²⁴ The presence of the *Columna Rostrata* in the fresco might also become a symbol for the Christian struggle against the heresy, here represented by the Muslim Turks. Through Marc Antonio's adoption of this symbol after the victory at Lepanto, he gave it a Christian content or interpretation and the *Columna Rostrata* becomes a symbol of the fight for the Christian belief that is for the Church of Rome.

The visualization of the prows and, not least, the anchors, along the *Columna Rostrata* might give associations to peace and victory anchored in the Colonna family in general and in Marc Antonio in special. The prows could in addition be interpreted as a sign of courage and strength, *fortitudo*, in war. The visualization of peace is strengthened by the representation of the dove, with an olive branch⁴²⁵ in front of one of the *Columna Rostrata*. This is a symbol both of peace, but with the olive branch, also of being elected, as the House of Colonna perhaps felt they were or perhaps wanted to give the impression that they were.

⁴¹⁹ Aikin 1980:594.

⁴²⁰ Chiari then uses a well known triumphal symbol.

⁴²¹ Aikin 1980:594.

⁴²² Aikin 1980:594.

⁴²³ Fischer 1969:369 ff. and Aikin 1980:594 -95.

⁴²⁴ Aikin 1980:595.

⁴²⁵ In this context I choose to see the dove with the olive branch as a symbol of peace and not as an attribute to the long gone Pamphilj pope, Innocent X, 1644 to 1655. On the other side, it is likely that the presence of the heraldic symbol of the Pamphilj family in this context also was meant to be a tribute to the Pamphilj family, through the marriage between Filippo II Colonna, the patron of this fresco by Chiari, and Olimpia Pamphilj in 1697.

The *Columna Rostrata*, together with, for instance, Marc Antonio's classical costume, the presence of *Hercules* and the emperor's standards give the fresco an explicitly classical framing. This communicates that the virtues and achievements of Marc Antonio in particular and the House of Colonna in general are comparable with the virtues and achievements of the Roman Empire. It also underlines the impression that the Colonna family represents the descendants both in virtues, achievements and blood of the old Roman.

6.4. Strategic contextualization

The House of Colonna then presents itself through the fresco by combining different symbols and scenes. In this way the fresco creates an allegorical world suitable to the Colonna in their pursuit of different social and political ends. In interpreting and discussing these different symbols and scenes, it is important to be aware that there has taken place a selection, some sort of *strategic contextualization*, out of which those elements which the Colonna family wants the readers to consider, are selected. An important question is therefore in what way the fresco produces its own context, and then chose for the readers the relevant context to consider. In other words, what might be interpreted as the *rhetorical manoeuvre*⁴²⁶ behind the choice of symbols and scenes in the fresco?

As I have been discussing all through this chapter, the fresco makes use of and communicates visually one version of a given reality chosen for the audience to consider. Central in the communication is the superior role of Marc Antonio in the *Battle of Lepanto*. However, as we saw earlier,⁴²⁷ Marc Antonio was one of several leaders in the battle. The Captain General of the Fleet was Don Juan de Austria from Spain, but he is not included in the programme. Neither are the Venetians who formed a central part of the Holy League.

In making this *rhetorical manoeuvre*, the Colonna family does not depart in principle from their Spanish or Venetians companions in the *Battle of Lepanto*. Like their allies, both Philip II of Spain as well as the Venetians made as much of their own role in the battle as they possibly could, at the expense of their other allies. In, for instance, the *Allegorical Portrait of Philip II* from 1575, by Titian,⁴²⁸ Philip II is celebrated as the winner of the *Battle of Lepanto*. We see Philip II holding up his newborn son and heir to a flying *Victory*, who bestows the palm and the laurel crown on the Spanish Habsburg monarchs.⁴²⁹ In the corner we see a Turk

⁴²⁶ The term is from Bal and Bryson 1991:179.

⁴²⁷ See section 5.1.2.

⁴²⁸ Now in Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, see illustration 20.

⁴²⁹ Humfrey 2007:192.

in chains and in the background a scene from the *Battle of Lepanto* is represented.⁴³⁰ Also in Venetian painting we encounter the same willingness to strategically contextualize the Battle and Victory of Lepanto. In *The Victory of Lepanto* by Veronese from 1574,⁴³¹ *Venice* is represented enthroned between *Justitia* and *Peace*, the latter holding an olive branch. Above *Venice* we see the Turkish fleet among a bevy of angels. In the middle, above *Venice*, Christ soars. He is holding a globe and blessing the victors.⁴³² This implies that the Colonna family followed a tradition of selective representation of reality among the victorious partners from the *Battle of Lepanto*.

From a political point of view this misrepresentation of the Spanish and Venetian contribution to the *Victory at Lepanto* might be said to be one of the most striking *rhetorical manoeuvres* in the context created for the reader to consider. The way Marc Antonio is represented in the fresco forms a conception of him as the unmistakeable hero of the *Battle of Lepanto*. This seems the result of a highly conscious and strategic choice. Nowhere, either in the fresco by Chiari, or in the frescoes by Coli and Gherardi in the main gallery or by Ricci in the other anteroom of the gallery, are other leaders from the *Battle of Lepanto* visualized in any way. This accentuates the political statement in the fresco and makes it clearer and more evident. Marc Antonio alone is given the honour for the victory in 1571.

To understand why it was important for the House of Colonna to make this strategic contextualization, it might be highly relevant in relation to the frescoes in the main hall of the gallery that Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna wanted to build good relations to the German-Roman emperor by being appointed the emperor's diplomat. This was a position of high standing in Rome and important for improving the rank of the Colonna family.⁴³³ In addition, Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, who ordered the frescoes in the main hall had a conflict with the Spanish monarch, partly related to the *Chinea*.⁴³⁴ This might be an additional reason for undermining the role of the Spanish Juan de Austria in the frescoes.

In her study, Strunck states that the Colonna family in the 17th century often present their coat of arms with the column placed on a double headed eagle, the symbol of the

⁴³⁰ This picture is related to a contemporary allegorical representation of Philip II, *Religion Succoured by Spain*, also by Titian, now in Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Here, heroic females in victorious postures are seen against a turbulent sea, where a Turk is seen riding in a marine chariot. In the foreground a lot of war instruments are represented.

⁴³¹ In *Sala dei Collegio*, Palazzo Ducale, Venice.

⁴³² Orliac 1940: 24. Another related example is *The Battle of Lepanto* also by Veronese, now in *Gallerie dell'Accademia*, Venice. In this allegorical representation, saints are presenting *Venice* to the Madonna in the upper section of the picture, while the battle is represented in the lower section, see Pallucchini 1953:43.

⁴³³ Strunck 2007: 29, 30 and 241.

⁴³⁴ See note 293 and section 5.1.3.

emperor.⁴³⁵ We also find this combination in the main hall of the gallery in the scene where Marc Antonio is entering Rome in triumph. Here the coat of arms of the Colonna family is represented on a banner, with a double-headed eagle as a background. Strunck interprets the presence of this symbol of the emperor in the main gallery as a sign that the House of Colonna relied upon a double political alliance at the turn of the 17th century, both the pope and the emperor. Strunck argues that the heraldic symbol of the Colonna family was not combined with a double-headed eagle during the *Battle of Lepanto*.⁴³⁶ In combining their coat of arms with the double-headed eagle in the fresco by Coli and Gherardi, the Colonna family may have wanted to signify their double political alliance. On the other hand, the Colonna family as the holder of the title *Gran Contestabile of Naples* from 1515⁴³⁷ was in all probability entitled to use the double headed eagle already in the early 16th century.⁴³⁸ The coat of arms of the Colonna family is for instance also represented in this way on the facade from 1653 on the Church of San Barnaba in Marino,⁴³⁹ a minor town close to Rome, owned by the Colonna family from the middle Ages until beginning of the 20th century.

In the fresco by Chiari, there is, nevertheless, no double-headed eagle represented. The only possible reference to the emperor in the fresco by Chiari might be that the crowns guarded by *Europe* also refer to the crown of the emperor. Loyalty to the emperor might therefore still be present, but not in the same outward way as in the frescoes by Coli and Ghiardi. This might be interpreted as a sign that Filippo II Colonna wanted to moderate the obvious support for the emperor that we see in Coli and Gherardi's frescoes, ordered by his father Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, and instead perhaps emphasize loyalty to the pope. Nevertheless, references to Juan de Austria are still absent. Also for Filippo II Colonna it was important to keep up the impression of Marc Antonio as the most important hero from the *Battle of Lepanto*.

⁴³⁵ Strunck 2007:240, note 143.

⁴³⁶ Strunck 2007:240. Strunck asserts that the presence of the eagle in this context “*entsprang wohl einzig dem Wunsch Lorenzo Onofrios, seine Verbindung zum Kaiserhaus bzw. seine Stellung as Principe del Sacro Romano Impero zum Ausdruck zu bringen*”. In English; the eagle in this context “*came out alone [from the] wish of Lorenzo Onofrio, [to express] his relation to the emperors house respectively his position as Prince of the Holy Roman Empire*”. Strunck argues further that this signalizes that the House of Colonna wants to change their political orientation, from Spain to the emperor, Strunck 2007:240. There is also an eagle in the fresco by Chiari, on the top of *SPQR* banner held by *Genio militare*, but this is properly a reference to the city of Rome, inherited from the antique, referring to Rome as the city of the emperors.

⁴³⁷ Given Fabrizio Colonna, see section 5.1.3.

⁴³⁸ Naples was during the 16th century under the Spanish throne, and Charles V (1500-58) was both Spanish king and German-Roman emperor. The double headed eagle is most likely given to the Colonna from the German-Roman emperor possible before the end of the 16th century. The reason for this is not clear, though it does not have to be a privilege connected directly to the title *Gran Contestabile*. Philip II of Spain, 1527-98, was the son of the Charles V.

⁴³⁹ See illustration 21.

Another difference between the fresco by Chiari and the frescoes in the main gallery which might be of rhetorical significance is that Chiari does not include any booty or spoils of war in his fresco, while Johann Paul Schor does so in his fresco in the main hall of the gallery. Was it because it was more meritorious to show the weapons and the vanquished enemy than booty or spoils? Or was it because it would compromise the more honourable intentions of Marc Antonio, in the way that an impression had to be made of him fighting for the faith and not for gold? In other words, would it change the *modus* of the fresco in a way that would moderate the heroic impression of Marc Antonio? As an apotheosis of Marc Antonio it might have been rhetorically important to represent him as pious as possible.

In terms of rhetoric it is interesting to ask why there are no references to the Colonna pope, Martin V or any of the many cardinals in the Colonna family. Intuitively, one reason might be that the strategic benefit from choosing Marc Antonio was estimated to be so great, that no room was found for the Colonna pope. As an early 15th century pope, Martin V would also be too apolitical in terms of the social and political ambitions of the Colonna family in the second half of the 17th century. Most important is perhaps that the courage, the *fortitudo* of the Colonna family had saved the pope and the west of Europe from the Turkish threat. In this, Martin V had no role. The threat from the east started in 1453, with the Turkish conquering of Constantinople. Facing what was regarded to be the end of the threat from the Turks at the turn of the 17th century, it was strategically important for the Colonna family to visualize that they had played a central part in fighting the Turks. In this context, military strength was more relevant to visualize than the spiritual strength represented by Martin V. On the other side, to include references to Martin V would have strengthened the references to the Church of Rome. Rhetorically, this means that an important tie between the Church of Rome and the Colonna family is muted to strengthen the importance of the *Battle of Lepanto*.

Another argument for the exclusion of the Colonna pope could be to further lengthen the distance to the rising papal families of Rome. In the embellishment of the palaces of these families, references to their popes often held a highly prominent place, as for instance in the fresco *Divine Providence* in Palazzo Barberini. Perhaps the Colonna family wanted to be so *rich* that they could afford to ignore their pope in this embellishment. Moreover, Martin V was probably widely known among the potential readers of the fresco, while the role of Marc Antonio was perhaps not known to the same extent. This might have been a further argument for Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna and later Filippo II Colonna to regard references to Martin V as superfluous or not relevant in this context. The Church of Rome was instead represented by

the achievements of Marc Antonio. The Chiari fresco was meant to be an apotheosis of Marc Antonio and him alone.

This concerns the more comprehensive question to ask in connection with strategic contextualization and the fresco as a *rhetorical manoeuvre*; why did the Colonna family chose Lepanto as a theme not only in the fresco by Chiari, but for the whole gallery? In what way was Lepanto relevant for both Lorenzo Onofrio and his son Filippo II? As long as they were familiar with the more literate developed frescoes by Pietro da Cortona in Galleria Pamphilj, it is likely that also the Colonna family considered a more literate theme for their frescoes.⁴⁴⁰

First, the choice of Lepanto has been claimed to be possibly related to the holy year 1675 and the celebration of the *Anno Santo*,⁴⁴¹ where the challenge of the Turkish aggression in the east still was a theme to which the west had to relate. The *Battle of Lepanto* was probably also present in people's minds at the turn of the 17th century. In 1671 there was a celebration of the one hundred years anniversary of the battle at Lepanto. Several memorial monuments were raised for this cause.⁴⁴²

Most likely the choice of theme in the fresco reflects the political and religious situation in west and central Europe during the second half of the 17th century. This situation resulted in the repulsion of the Turkish invasion at the turn of the century. Important milestones in the termination of this conflict were the victory of the west in Vienna in 1683 and later the final peace treaty at Karlowitz in 1699. This makes it reasonable to assume that given that the House of Colonna had played a part in this struggle, they wanted to use this as an instrument for establishing sympathy and goodwill among the winning partners, especially the German-Roman emperor and the Church of Rome.

The aspiration of an alliance with the pope might be obvious in that the victory at Lepanto contributed to safeguard the Church of Rome from the Muslims. But the victory at Lepanto also benefited the emperor. Since the 16th century, Austria was holding a part of Hungary. At the same time the Turks represented a threat for the empire. In the peace at Karlowitz in 1699 the Austrians succeeded in keeping the Turks out of Hungary. This implies

⁴⁴⁰ Strunck suggests that Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna might have considered a more literate theme from his favourite author Tasso, Strunck 2007:228. Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's relation to the author Tasso is discussed in Gino Benzoni *Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 27, Rom, 1982:358.

⁴⁴¹ Strunck 2007:228.

⁴⁴² In the *Sala dei Capitani*, in *Palazzo dei Conservatori*, sculptures were raised in honour of illustrious generals who distinguished themselves in military actions. This includes a statue of Marc Antonio II Colonna. The pedestal of the sculpture has the following inscription: "*M.Antonio Colvmnae. Civi clarissimo triumphali, debitvm virtvti praemivm vtile posteritati exemplvm grata pateria posvit, ex.s.c. Anno DXCV*". See also section 5.3.1 and illustration 15.

that as a *rhetorical manoeuvre* to please the emperor, visually communicating the role of Marc Antonio in the *Battle of Lepanto* was a strategic choice. In light of their wish to build alliances with the emperor, it might be relevant to ask whether the Colonna family through the fresco wanted to suggest a connection between the victory at Lepanto and the Austrian struggle against the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 17th century.

Notwithstanding these strategic and political considerations and speculations, since the battle against the Turks was a uniting and national-wide cause across the borders of the principal and republican states of what we today reckon as Italy, the choice of Marc Antonio as a principal theme could also be interpreted as more of an apolitical choice. This even in religious terms, as it was a victory in the service of the pope himself. In this regard, this theme was perhaps the best Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna and his son Filippo II Colonna could choose, given the controversial situation they found themselves in at the turn of the 17th century. The *Battle of Lepanto* and the challenge from the Turkish interest in Europe was perfect for elevating the Colonna family.

Even if it is possible to read a highly political statement into the fresco, the fresco is at the same time largely diplomatic in its form and content. The main theme is held to be the apotheosis of the family hero and his achievements at Lepanto, for the best of the Church of Rome, the pope, and the city of Rome. But for the equals of the Colonna family at the turn of the 17th century, it is reasonable to suppose that those alliances the Colonna family wanted to build, through their appeal to contemporary conventions, was well known.

7. The developing of art from a social and political reasoning

In terminating this thesis, an important question is to what degree my discussion have established as probable that the fresco by Chiari developed from a social and political reasoning, from the Colonna family's point of view. Related to this, I will discuss in this final argument to what degree the fresco might be seen as a visual expression of the society in which it is created and whether the ordering of symbols and scenes consciously intends to communicate visually the ambitions of the patron.

7.1. The fresco as a manifestation of political reasoning

The most conspicuous trait of the whole fresco, and perhaps the strongest argument for my assertion that it developed out of a social and political reasoning, is the introduction of Marc Antonio II Colonna as a theme. In this way the House of Colonna displayed itself as playing a central role in one of the most important political and religious issues in the present time i.e. the Turkish threat. At the turn of the 17th century, the Christian-European defence against the Turks was indeed successful, not the least considering the victory at the *Battle of Vienna* in 1683. This event marked a turning point in the war between the Turks and the German-Roman emperor and led to the peace treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, after which one could definitely state that the Moslem-Turkish threat against the Christian-European society had come to an end. By positioning themselves in relation to this highly topical and important political issue, the Colonna family emphasized their central role. This might be said to be the strongest argument for seeing the Chiari fresco as a manifestation of political reasoning.

Through the Chiari fresco, the House of Colonna marks its important role in a highly present political issue. By introducing both the Church of Rome and the cosmic context opposite each other with Marc Antonio in the middle, there should be no doubt that the Colonna family hereby sought to state their hero's important and central role in securing both. The exposure of these two topics in relation to Marc Antonio and the *Battle of Lepanto* might be another argument for the political motivation behind the fresco. In this way Chiari emphasises the consequences of the action and involvement of the House of Colonna in the

Turkish issue in Europe. This might have been important for asserting themselves in relation to the contemporary Roman nobility.

As we have seen, the argument is strengthened and visually illustrated with the inclusion of the virtues of Marc Antonio and the House of Colonna, *Justitia*, *Temperantia*, *Prudentia* and *Fortitudo*. Although representations of virtues were rather widespread in Roman art during the 16th and 17th centuries, the idea of illustrating their virtues might be read as another important argument for the social and political reasoning behind the fresco from the Colonna's point of view. What makes the fresco so special in this regard is the strong focus on *Fortitudo*, while the other three virtues are given minor roles. The prominent position *Fortitudo* holds in the fresco by embracing the column, the latter being both its own attribute and the heraldic symbol of the Colonna family, is undoubtedly intentionally and politically important. In this way the Colonna family accentuates *Fortitudo* as their most important virtue. It was this virtue, i.e. quality, that led Marc Antonio ahead in the *Battle of Lepanto*, who saved the Church of Rome and secured not only the cosmic order, but also Europe with all its kings and princes. The theological virtues, highly common in contemporary Rome, are omitted in the fresco. They had no important role in this project, where the main focus is to emphasize the Colonna's role in the contemporary world politics, represented by the battle against the Turks in Europe.

Another argument in this thesis for the Colonna family using the fresco in the pursuit of social and political ends is the outstretched self-representation in the fresco through their heraldic symbol, i.e. the column. This heraldic element is strategically loaded with coded messages that stress both the qualities of the family as well as its members' excellent abilities as leaders. We see this in the use of the *Columna Rostrata*, which calls attention to classical antique leadership and victories, and in the references both to *Hercules* and *Fortitudo*, which call attention to virtues like strength and courage. Both the two latter personifications are linked in the fresco directly to the House of Colonna, through the column. In this way, the representation of *Fortitudo* becomes an argument both for the central role played by the Colonna in the conflict with the Turks and for their abilities in contemporary politics.

On the other side, all these visual arguments do not necessarily prove that the intention with this fresco actually was to pursue social and political ends. Here I touch upon a larger question regarding the meaning of visual art. Does visual art have to mean something at all? As Sinding-Larsen asserts in relation to the spire of the Church Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza in Rome, it might be that a given piece of art does not necessarily have to mean anything beyond

its very self.⁴⁴³ In relation to the fresco by Chiari, my assertion is that because of the arguments brought ahead in this thesis, art has a meaning. If not, Chiari, on behalf of the House of Colonna, might have made another choice for the decoration of the *throne room* in Palazzo Colonna.

My hypothesis is that all the different messages of the fresco are significant for a reason, most likely a social and political one. The widespread use of large fresco programs during the baroque in Rome indicates that among the aspiring families in this city, visual art was regarded as an excellent media for communicating the virtues of the family. This was also the case for the Colonna family.

I therefore find Baxandall's statement about 15th century religious pictures, that they existed to meet instrumental ends,⁴⁴⁴ valid also for this secular fresco. But while 15th century religious paintings were meant to help with specific intellectual activities, this fresco by Chiari was meant to help with social and political aspirations for power, recognition and prestige.

7.2. Art reflecting the society

In concluding this thesis, it is relevant to ask whether the social and political competition in which the Colonna family was involved, was the direct occasion for the development of this fresco, just as Reinhard and Karsten saw nepotism as central in bringing forth the large production of art in Rome during the 16th and 17th centuries. Considering the large fresco programmes of also other Roman palaces in the 16th and 17th centuries we find that the use of art in the pursuit of social and political ends must have been quite widespread. In this way the Colonna followed a trend highly influenced by the *Kardinalnepoten* some decades earlier. In a society where outward appearance was assigned so much importance, visual art becomes both a part of the society and at the same time a mirror to it.

Visual art, here represented by the fresco by Chiari, becomes a visual expression and realization of the society in line with Bourdieu's thesis about art as a distinctive, historical realization reflecting the society in which it is created.⁴⁴⁵ By introducing the concept of *reflecting logic*⁴⁴⁶ Bourdieu accentuated the relation between the society and art. Accordingly, the piece of art could both be connected to the artist, the patron and their background, the

⁴⁴³ Sinding-Larsen 1989:10.

⁴⁴⁴ Baxandall 1988:40, see also section 3.3.

⁴⁴⁵ See section 1.4 and Bourdieu 1996:114.

⁴⁴⁶ See section 1.4.

intended audience and the function of the work in question. The composition and the iconography of the fresco become in a way evidence of this society. This implies that in searching the intrinsic meaning of art, it becomes important to grasp the underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a period or a social class.⁴⁴⁷

To what degree Arne Karsten is right, stating that a political reasoning brought forth by the papal dynasties in the 16th and 17th centuries is a condition for the development of the baroque artistic style, is not for me to discuss in this context. What is more certain is that during the baroque, an artistic language developed in Rome based on virtues and heraldic elements as tools of visualizing and sending messages. These tools were highly suitable for elevating persons and families as well as illustrating their good qualities.

This is strengthened by the mutual relation between the painters, through their works, which is illustrated through the discussion of artistic context in this thesis. This creates some sort of common references and conventions within which the painter work and the patron decide.

7.3. Effective visual argumentation

An argument is usually selected for its effectiveness.⁴⁴⁸ This might also be the case when it comes to visual argumentation. By choosing such an important theme, the House of Colonna chose an argument that at least partly would win the contemporary audience in favour of achieving the prestige, positions and power they sought. On the other side, the argumentation does not necessarily mirror the reality, as we have seen in section 6.4, but instead it mirrors a *shaped reality*. Accordingly, I have demonstrated how Chiari presents Marc Antonio and the Colonna family, through the use of rhetorical means, in a most favourable way when it comes to the strife against the Turks.

In selecting those elements that the Colonna family wants the audience to consider, the fresco produces its own context. In this way, the fresco perhaps becomes an evidence of the fact *that the context it is produced for [...] is the right one*.⁴⁴⁹ One consequence of this way of interpreting visual art is that art can be seen as autonomous in relation to reality. Visual art does not reflect the reality per se, but is rather to be seen a construction of it. Art represents a sort of *chosen reality*, and becomes an instrument for giving an interpreted impression of

⁴⁴⁷ See Panofsky 1955:30.

⁴⁴⁸ See Goldstein 1991:645.

⁴⁴⁹ Bal and Bryson 1991:179.

reality. In this way, this neo-classic fresco might be said to follow the rhetorical culture prominent in baroque art,⁴⁵⁰ in that the *rhetorical functions* of the fresco *constitute* its *symbolic form*.⁴⁵¹

According to Goldstein,⁴⁵² classical rhetoric provides the basis for a narrative representation of events, not only in shaping reality, but in moralizing about it as well. Also in the fresco by Chiari we could interpret the *shaped reality* as highly *moralizing*. By comparing the sentiment of the Chiari fresco with the frescoes by Pietro da Cortona, *Divine Providence*, and Andrea Sacchi, *Divine Wisdom*, in Palazzo Barberini, we find that while *Fortitudo*, the symbol of military strength, steadfastness and courage, gives strength and prosperity in Chiari's fresco, the same is true for the more philosophic and theological virtues in the frescoes in Palazzo Barberini. Both are chosen to reign, but they strike different chords. Colonna uses strength and courage, Barberini more philosophic characteristics. The Chiari fresco in Palazzo Colonna signifies a raw power approach, through the abilities of military leadership and strength, while the frescoes in the Barberini palace signify their more philosophic and theological capacity. Through these qualities safety and prosperity are built and secured. In this case, the moralizing elements in the frescoes both *teach* and *inform* the audience, prominent rhetorical functions of visual art during both the Renaissance and the baroque.

The theme, rhetorically, might also have been regarded as more effective than purely allegorical themes, chosen, for instance, by the Pamphilj family in their palace at Piazza Navona. Given that the purpose of the fresco seems to be to send a message to the pope, the emperor, the other monarchs of central east and south Europe and not the least the rest of the Roman nobility, it is likely that the Turkish issue was more *politically correct*, to use a modern term.

What might strengthen the effect of the visual and rhetorical argumentation even further is the restricted access to the gallery. If we assume, with Chandler,⁴⁵³ that the meaning of a sign lies in the social context of its use, it might be natural to assume that the Colonna took this into account in securing that the audience and the House of Colonna shared some codes for understanding, thus increasing the rhetorical value of the message.

⁴⁵⁰ Levy 2004:43.

⁴⁵¹ Levy argues that just as perspectives constitutes the symbolic form in Panofsky's renaissance, so, with an unspecified reference to Giulio Carlo Argans, rhetoric functions as the symbolic form for the baroque, Levy 2004:43. This might also be truth for the neo-classic fresco by Chiari.

⁴⁵² Goldstein 1991:646. See also section 3.4.

⁴⁵³ Chandler 2002:9.

Frescoes might therefore be seen as a medium for arguing and communicating messages, not only at the turn of the 17th century, but throughout the whole of the previous baroque. As had been done by their equals before, the Colonna family used the assets and the means available to them in shaping or representing the image benefiting them the most at the turn of the 17th century. This included supporting the alliances they wanted to build and subduing the relations or facts which compromised their ambitions. In this way, it might be more appropriate to talk about representational art. What is done through the fresco is to represent the Colonna family in the way that they wanted to be represented. And by fortune, they had the privilege of having a family hero, who had been fighting for a cause that was still highly relevant at the turn of the 17th century. No other family in Rome at the time could present a similar hero. This allowed for the Colonna family to use their story as an instrument to fully glorify them selves. In this way the fresco communicated some sort of *ideal*, not only for the principal, but also for the generations to come.

Finally, did the Colonna family achieve what they wanted? Did their social and political position improve in the years to come after the accomplishment of the fresco, in terms of positions, power and prestige? This is difficult to answer, partly because positions and prestige encompasses relations both measureable and immeasurable. What we know is that the family in the 18th century succeeded once more in strengthening their position within the Church. Carlo Colonna, the brother of Filippo II Colonna, who ordered the fresco by Chiari, became a cardinal in 1706.⁴⁵⁴ Later, also the son of Filippo II Colonna, Girolamo, and two of his grandsons Marc Antonio VII and Pietro, became cardinals.⁴⁵⁵ This means that the Colonna family a few years later again became represented in the inner ecclesiastical circles.⁴⁵⁶

What might be more important is the way the fresco, together with the whole embellishment of the gallery, manifested and raised the status of the Colonna family. This accounts not only to the contemporary Roman society at the turn of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century, but for all generations to come. The Colonna family's prestige and status were sustained through the fresco, in the eyes of the pope, the emperor, the others kings and princes of central and southern Europe and in Roman society as a whole. Every prominent representative who visited Galleria Colonna could see, and experience, that the

⁴⁵⁴ Carlo Colonna became first *maggiordomo*, some sort of head waiter, for Pope Innocent XII, before created cardinal by Pope Clemens XI in 1706, see Paschini 1955:69.

⁴⁵⁵ Paschini 1955:70

⁴⁵⁶ Pope Clemens XI Albani (1700-21) once more also confirmed the Colonna's role as *Assistente al Soglio*, see note 284.

Colonna family was equivalent in strength, leadership and courage. This is true for visitors to the Galleria Colonna even today.

This family had saved the Church of Rome, the emperor, the princes and kings of central and southern Europe and Rome from the Turkish threat. It was for these brave deeds that the Colonna family wanted to be remembered and is remembered through the conspicuous frescoes of their gallery.

Even if large fresco programmes still were regarded as suitable means of communicating rhetorically with a larger audience of Rome, in the year 1700, this tradition declined gradually in the years to come. Together with the rest of the frescoes in Galleria Colonna, the Chiari fresco represents one of the last grand fresco programmes in Rome's private palaces. This tradition nevertheless left us these outstanding works of art from the days of glory of the great families of Rome, and they make us remember the families for their remarkable wealth, position and status in contemporary Rome. In this way, their names, through these magnificent rhetorical programmes, are written into the history of art forever.

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